

FACTS
RELATING TO THE LATE
CAPTAIN P. CHRISTIE, R.N.
WHILE PRINCIPAL AGENT OF
TRANSPORTS
IN THE BLACK SEA

***[DJA: The shameful treatment of a
thorough seaman and an excellent
officer.]***

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FACTS, &c.

The grasping and yet insidious policy of the Czar had given great alarm as well as disgust to all well-thinking people, and throughout the whole country the loss of our East Indian possessions began to be debated, when the brutal massacre of Sinop roused the nation from the deep sleep a forty years' peace had lulled us into, and Great Britain rose as one man to aid the Turks, and at the same time put a stop to the machinations of the Emperor.

The page of history does not tell us of this or any other nation entering upon a war with such zeal and singleness of heart as England did on the Crimean campaign. Our taxes were increased : they were submitted to without a murmur. The cry was next for soldiers and sailors : it was instantly responded to, and without loss of time our ships were manned by noble crews, and freighted with brave and gallant soldiers ; and, as each ship left our shores, the very earth shook with the cheers of their countrymen, mingled with **[4]** prayers for their success, and a happy termination of the war. Alas! alas! little did those brave men know what was awaiting them, - little did they know how few of them were ever again to see their native land, - little did they know of the strong Russian party that existed in high quarters in this country, nor did they take into consideration that they were sent forth by a Government the most weak and contemptible that ever held the reins of this country : without the slightest pretention to talent : without fairness or justice : without moral courage to defend their blunders or to protect those they employed : to save themselves and their places has been seen to be the sole object of their political existence, - ever ready to make a scapegoat of the best and bravest by trickery and subterfuge, while they themselves were hid from public view. Such were the men who, without any prudential measures, sent forth our noble fleet and army, the strongest and the finest that ever quitted this country. But it is not the province of these few pages to take the historian's place or to write in full the miserable detail of this ill-concocted and worse conducted war ; neither is it the place or wish of the relatives of an ill-used and calumniated brave officer to bring down odium, far less vengeance, on those who treated him as he was treated. They know to whom vengeance belongs : they know a day is yet to come, when judgement will be pronounced upon us all, when the subterfuges **[5]** of office and the

refuges of lies will avail nothing, - when the blood of those who perished before Sebastopol without the slightest semblance of care or comfort - the crews of those noble ships dashed to pieces on the rocks of Balaklava - will be required at their hands. "War's deadly blast *has* blown, and gentle peace returning," we have seen brave officers come back, wounded, broken in health, and sitting down unpromoted, unheeded ; while the vile system of nepotism and "high interest" has bestowed all sorts of good berths and promotion on the *very* men, both in Army and Navy, that were the *very* causes of our suffering and losses. The nation may be deceived for a while - those who have done these things may keep them from the broad light of day ; but truth will come out, and woe to them will be the day when the truth *does* come out.

The subject of the following pages, Captain Peter Christie, R.N., was one of six brothers, who have well and faithfully served their country, viz. three in the Army and three in the Navy. Captain Peter Christie went to sea very early in life, and was thorough seaman and an excellent officer : his whole heart was in his profession. He had no relish for a life of indolence and idleness. Full of activity and energy of character, he pined for want of employment during the few years he was on shore, and constantly applied to the Admiralty for employment ; and on hearing that war was [6] likely to break out, he instantly renewed his application, offering his services, and was appointed Principal Agent for Transports.

This post, it must be remembered, was next to the Commander-in-Chief by land, and the Admiral of the Fleet by sea : the most important and responsible in the whole arrangement connected with the war. And that as far as he was permitted he *did* his duty in the most efficient manner, is clearly set forth in the accompanying documents. But we must farther remember the situation in which he was placed made his character and his name the property of the nation - Captain Christie holding this office made him a public man, and it now behoves his country to uphold his name, now that he is gone, and unable to defend himself.

On the 21st of March, 1854, Captain Peter Christie received a letter from Captain Milne, junior Lord of the Admiralty, asking him how he felt with regard to accepting the appointment of Principal Agent for Transports, as such an office was about to be organised ; that it was a situation of great responsibility and labour, and required an officer of standing in the Navy, and could only be given to such. Captain Milne begged to have a speedy answer, saying, - "Should you like to have that command I may have it in my power to assist you in procuring it, and shall do all I can for you."

Captain Christie replied that it was an office [7] which, of course, he had no experience in, but that if the Lords of the Admiralty honoured him by entrusting such a command to him, he should do all in his power to discharge his duty to their satisfaction.

On the 25th Captain Christie received a telegraphic despatch at eleven o'clock, A.M., requesting his immediate appearance at the Admiralty : his portmanteau was quickly packed, and he left Balmuto in time for the boat to Edinburgh, and started by the express train for London that night.

Captain Christie went to the Admiralty on the 26th. He first called on Captain Milne, who reported his arrival to Sir James Graham, by whom he was received in the kindest manner, and it was at once settled that he was to get the command.

On the 8th April, Captain Christie sailed from Woolwich on board the "Emperor", steam transport ; General Cator, Sir Richard England, and other members of Lord Raglan's staff went with him in the same vessel. After a good passage of six days they arrived at Gibraltar, where they were put in quarantine, and did not land.

Captain Christie was at Malta for some days ; he then sailed for Constantinople, where his time was fully occupied in arranging for the embarking of the troops. He met Lord Raglan or Lord de Ros every morning at half-past ten o'clock. [8]

The newspapers were filled with the merits of this "excellent officer", and the following history will show the gross injustice he met with from his ungrateful country.

The following articles from the *Times*, *British Army Despatch*, *United Service Journal*, &c. &c/, will testify to Captain Christie's high standing in his profession :-

TRANSPORT SERVICE.

March 31st, 1854.

"The Admiralty have selected a most deserving and experienced officer to be Superintendent of Transports at Woolwich, in the appointment of Captain Christie (1841) ; he is an officer of twenty-one years' service afloat, chiefly during war, and in sharp affairs. He saw some gallant affairs when Lieutenant of the "Cambrian" (48), in the boat affairs with the Greek pirates, especially in a desperate conflict in which the British lost six men killed and thirteen wounded. He was made a Commander for his share in the

Battle of Navarino as First Lieutenant of the "Cambrian," and was Posted from command of the Rose (18) on the Brazillian coast, engaged in suppressing the traffic in slaves.

"The Transport Service has, of necessity, become the most arduous, and difficult, and responsible of any connected with the war, and requires men of great energy and experience to conduct it ; it is one of the most thankless appointments, for it is impossible to succeed altogether when the requirements and expectations of all branches of the Royal Service - Army as well as Navy - are to be anticipated. The

[9] service, too, is materially increasing itself every day, and nothing but the acutest judgement and foresight can keep pace with its progress."

Captain Christie, with the most unwearied zeal, carried on his laborious post to the great satisfaction of all with whom he had to do until the visit of Mr Layard to Balaklava ; then appeared the first of a series of articles in the *Times* blaming Captain Christie for the loss of the transports on the night of 14th November, 1854, and for various alleged acts of mismanagement. Whether *any* or all of these articles were from the pen of Mr. Layard, we do not presume to determine ; but unquestionably, soon after his return from the Crimea, the *honourable* Member stood up in his place in the House of Commons, and pointed out Captain Christie as one of those in a situation for which he was totally unfit ; alleging that he was an old man, upwards of seventy, unable to leave his ship after dark for fear of endangering his life from catarrh, and attributing the bad state of the harbour at Balaklava to his mismanagement. Sir James Graham might at once have disproved every one of these charges ; he might have told the Honourable Member for Aylesbury, that an inspection of the Admiralty books would prove that Captain Christie was fifty-seven, not seventy years of age ; that he was selected for the post in consequence of his former service and present fitness for its duties ; that Captain [10] Christie had no control over the harbour arrangements, though he had *suggested* the plan of having a regular police, a system of guard boats, and a set of signals, all of which suggestions were tardily adopted afterwards. But Sir J. Graham made no reply to the Member for Aylesbury's speech, and even a few nights afterwards allowed one of his colleagues in office* to give him (Sir J.G.) credit for having anticipated Mr Layard's animadversions, by sending out an order that Captain Christie should be superseded and tried by Court Martial.

Captain Christie was kept in perfect ignorance of the mis-statements which were made against him in the House of

Commons, and upon receiving a letter from the Admiralty on the 23rd February ordering him home, without any reason being assigned, he imagined that he was wanted to give evidence at the Sebastopol enquiry going on in London ; but the *Times* at length acquainted him with the falsehoods which had been stated in the House, and which made him most anxious to clear himself before the Sebastopol Committee closed : but although he received orders on the 23rd of February, that he was to leave, the Admiralty kept him at Balaklava whilst they gave his successor leave to go to Malta, by which means Captain Christie *was kept in command of the transports for six weeks after he was nominally SUPERSEDED.*

* Mr. Gladstone.

[11] On the 1st April he left Balaklava in the “Manilla” transport, Captain William M’Kenzie’s vessel, in high health and spirits ; at Constantinople he received an order from the Admiralty to return to Balaklava to stand a Court Martial, as their Lordships wished to give an opportunity of “refuting the charges against him.” Captain Christie had many weeks before informed the Admiralty of the groundlessness of the accusations, and claimed their protection ! what that amounted to we all know !! It was *nil!!!*

Captain Christie did return ; and, unfortunately, just at the time the low fever was spreading at Kamiesch and its neighbourhood. Deserted by those who ought to have protected his fair fame and brought to light his exertions in the fulfilment of his arduous duties, he sank under the double weight of disease and sorrow, and breathed his last on the 1st May, 1855.

The following extracts are from newspapers :-

“Morning Herald’s” Correspondent, Feb. 17th.

“It is rumoured that both Admiral Boxer and Captain Christie are either recalled or on the point of resigning. About the truth of this report I am by no means certain ; but if Captain Christie goes, his loss will be felt and deeply regretted by every transport master out here.”

“Times,” February 23rd, 1855.

ABSTRACT OF MR. GLADSTONE’S SPEECH.

“I heard the Honourable Member for Aylesbury, the other night state, that it was the duty of Government at once **[12]** to

proceed to the dismissal of Captain Christie, the head of the Transport Service, on account of his inefficiency.

“Well, now, how stands the case as regards Captain Christie? It shews that the Government are beforehand with you, in cases where that facts are at all clear. The Honourable Member for Aylesbury said – and he made it a part of his case in attacking the Government :- ‘Why do you not put him out of office?’ Now, had Captain Christie been put out of office? He had been dismissed by my Right Honourable Friend near me. But is this all? Captain Christie was on his way home – he had reached Malta – when my right Honourable Friend, hearing that Captain Christie had been chargeable with mismanagement, sent for Captain Christie and made him return to the East, to take his trial by Court Martial. The Honourable Member said Captain Christie had been guilty of mismanagement, and in that respect opinions agreed with the prepossessions of my Right Honourable Friend. Well, Sir, we are in the habit of thinking a great deal of what any one says who has been out in the Crimea – and if some one comes home from the Crimea and says that the Army is perishing, and that gross mismanagement exists – then within twenty-four hours some Honourable Member is sure to rise in this House and say – ‘I have just seen a gentleman who has come from the Crimea and he says that the Army is perishing, and that gross mismanagement exists.’ The Honourable Member says that he was in the East in October or November, and that Captain Christie was guilty of mismanagement. But the other night the Honourable Member for Linlithgow (Mr. G. Dundas), in a most manly manner – when he heard of the intentions of Government – got up in his place, and speaking [13] as an eye-witness, bore testimony to the great exertions and merits of Captain Christie – (hear, hear.) You may learn from the confictions and contradictions of such testimony as this, that to ascertain the truth of contested facts which occurred 3,000 miles off, is no very easy task, and that the evidence upon such subjects had better be taken by those who are responsible on the spot. (Hear, hear). Sir, I object to the committee on constitutional grounds.”

*From the “Morning Herald’s” Correspondent,
February 28th, 1855.*

“The removal of Captain Christie from his post, as Superintendent of the Transports, is much regretted at Balaklava. The Masters of our Transports, as a slight memorial of the esteem and respect which they entertain for Captain Christie, are about to present him with a Testimonial, and a hundred pounds has already been subscribed for that purpose.

“Whatever gratification Captain Christie may derive from this tribute, it must be far more to him to reflect, that in a most arduous time, he has thoroughly discharged his duties, and that he is almost the only officer connected with the port of Balaklava who has not been spoken of in the most disparaging terms, or against whom there are not innumerable charges of neglect and mismanagement.”

*From Correspondent of “Morning Herald,”
March 17th, 1855.*

“The statement made by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons, that Captain Christie had been dismissed his command, and returned to England as far as Malta, and had there received orders from the Admiralty to return to [14] the East and await his trial by Court Martial, is totally with-out the least foundation whatever. Captain Christie has never quitted Balaklava since the first transports arrived here ; and I think I am correct in stating that up to the middle of February he was ignorant of his having been superseded. When any Honourable Member commits a breach of order or Parliamentary etiquette, it is usual for the Speaker to ‘name him,’ and surely, in times like these, when the whole country is breathlessly watching the debates in Parliament, for what it believes to be authentic news from the seat of war, the Member who takes advantage of this feel-ing, and for party purposes puts forward statements without a particle of foundation, should not escape without some censure from the House on privileges he is abusing. There would be much less of these official mis-statements, for which it is presumed there is not the excuse of ignorance, if the Minister making them, be he who he might, was publicly named by the Speaker, and admonished to be more careful for the future.

“To Captain Christie the statement of Mr Gladstone can make little difference, as he is to be tried by Court Martial on his return to England, when the *truth* must come out, and when, as every one who has been out here well knows, his innocence will be completely established.

“The Government very wisely try Captain Christie by a Court Martial, because they know he will come out scathe-less ; and if the man whom the Government selects as a defaulter can make such a defence, what will not the country be prepared to believe of those who have never been accused at all?

[How Mr. Gladstone came to make such a statement was never explained.]

[15] The following is a copy of a letter which Captain Marsh, R.N., sent to the Editor of the *Times*, with a request that it might be immediately published in that paper ; but when Captain Marsh

returned to England, in June, he was much annoyed to find that the Editor had not granted the request, - he had not the justice to state truth in vindication of the character of an absent officer.

BALAKLAVA, March 8th, 1855.

Sir, - On looking over the debates of the 22nd February, my attention was particularly called to the statement of Mr. Layard with respect to Captain Christie, R.N., the Principal Agent for Transports out here ; and as these statements are directly contrary to truth, I feel myself bound, not only as an old friend and messmate of Captain Christie, but upon my own personal observation of what has been passing out here for months, to give them this flat contradiction. Mr. Layard begins (as Lord Palmerston properly observed) his vulgar declamation by saying "at the head of the service was a Captain Christie - an old gentleman more than seventy years of age, who could not leave his ship after dark without endangering his life from catarrh, and who, for six days had been unable to land at Balaklava."

I am at a loss to understand how Mr. Layard could gratuitously come forward and make such a statement, knowing as he must that it was not borne out with the least shadow of truth, - in the first place Captain Christie being a much younger man than Mr. Layard wishes to make him out ; and as to Mr. Layard's voluntary about catarrh, and being six days without being able to land, &c., I am in a position to say, not only on my own authority, but on the authority of [16] nearly every officer of both men-of-war and transports, that it was a flight of imagination of the *Honourable* Gentleman. Mr. Layard having come all the way out here, he ought, in justice to himself and others, to have taken the trouble to have made himself acquainted with the subject on which he intended to treat. As for instance, in his vituperative spirit and ignorance of facts, he wishes to place the state of Balaklava harbour on the shoulders of Captain Christie : every one must know, *even to the boys on the streets* (quoting Mr. Layard's own words), that Captain Christie has never had anything to do with the arrangements in Balaklava harbour - on the contrary, his duties are strictly confined to civil duties, subject to the executive authorities in every instance ; and I can state, on my honour, as an officer, I have been frequently in company with Captain Christie, and heard him not only deplore the difficulties he had to encounter, but have seen myself the onerous position in which he has been placed. Here I must again quote Mr. Layard :- "Had not Balaklava been placed under a separate and divided authority it would not have become the chaos it has." In conclusion, I will merely allude to another injustice done to my friend in reference to the loss of the "Prince." Had Captain Christie's wishes been carried out, that vessel would have been safe in this harbour ; but such was not to be, the executive ordered it otherwise. There is but one expression

of feeling among the officers out here, and that is indignation against the statements alluded to.

The vindication of an old and tried officer I feel will be sufficient excuse for intruding myself at such length.

I am, Sir,

Your truly obliged,

(Signed)

DIGBY MARSH,

Captain, R.N.

[17] Major Napier Christie, upon reading the falsehoods uttered in the House of Commons by Mr. Layard against Captain Christie, wrote to the M.P. for Aylesbury, and after waiting in vain for a fortnight for an answer he wrote to the Editor of the *Morning Herald* begging he would insert his letter in his paper.

The same request was made to the Editor of the *Times*, but it met with the same fate as Captain Marsh's from that paper.

To the Editor of the "Morning Herald."

Sir, - On the 23rd ult., I addressed a letter to Mr. Layard, of which the enclosed is a copy.

I had hoped that that gentleman, on being made aware that he had (unintentionally, no doubt) misrepresented facts, would have considered it fair to make some explanation ; but as I have not received any, perhaps in justice to an absent officer, you will do me the favour to insert my letter in the *Morning Herald*, and oblige,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) N.T.CHRISTIE

March 7th, 1855,

The Editor of the *Morning Herald* immediately complied with Major Christie's request, and inserted the following letter :

Viewfield, Aberdeen, February 23rd,

1855.

Sir, - In your speech in the House of Commons on the 19th inst., you are reported to have stated, in alluding to the Transport Service,

that "at the head of that service was [18] Captain Christie, a gentleman of upwards of seventy years of age, whose health was so impaired, that he could not leave his ship after nightfall without getting a catarrh."

If your speech has been correctly reported, I have to inform you that you have stated what is contrary to fact, and have thereby done what you can to injure an absent man. My brother, Captain Christie, is fifty-eight years of age, and never was subject to catarrh in his life, and up to the time of his sailing for the East, was in robust health. If his health has suffered since he went to the Crimea, it has suffered in the service of his country ; but I am not aware that it has : and in a letter dated the 5th inst., he makes no mention of such being the case.

As to how the Transport Service has been conducted, I will make no remark ; but, on investigation, I believe it will be found, that, as far as he had control, every thing has been done to the entire satisfaction of those best qualified to judge in such matters.

With regard to the confusion said to exist in the harbour of Balaklava, and which you impute to the mismanagement of Captain Christie, if you had made any enquiry before you spoke, you would have found that the responsibility of the arrangements in that harbour, previous to the appointment of a Harbour Master, rested on the senior Naval Officer present, and that Captain Christie had nothing to do with it.

I am far from wishing to insinuate that you have wilfully misrepresented facts; but when a Member in his place in Parliament names an individual, he is bound, as an honest man, to state nothing but what he knows to be strictly true.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

N.T.CHRISTIE

A.H. Layard, Esq. M.P., London

[19] Mr. Christie of Durie, upon reading Mr. Layard's false statements in the House of Commons, sent to the parish register for a certificate of Captain Christie's age, which he sent to Mr. Layard, when the following correspondence took place :

Durie, 3rd March, 1855.

Sir, - You will see by the enclosed certificate, that Captain Christie, R.N., instead of being above seventy, is under sixty ; and you will see by the following extract from his letter to me of 4th January, that he is *not* the responsible senior Naval officer at Balaklava : "I never saw a more severe gale than that of the 14th. I only saved the 'Melbourne' by cutting her masts away....Three times did I send in a Lieutenant to the Senior Naval Officer in Balaklava, to beg of him

to allow the 'Prince' to go in, as she had only one anchor, but it was refused, and she was lost."

You will find, upon enquiry, that Captain Christie is an excellent and active officer ; that upon the present occasion he has had more than enough to do, and *has done* more than could be expected from one man ; and that he is deserving of praise for his assiduity and good management in the transport and safe landing of so large a force.

I have no doubt that you will take an early opportunity to remedy, as far as you can, the (unintentional) injury you have done my brother.

I remain,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) C.H.CHRISTIE.

A. H. Layard, Esq.

[20]

MR. LAYARD'S REPLY.

Sir, - I have received the certificate you have sent me in proof of Captain Christie's age. Had the tone of your previous note been different, I should have replied to it. I can offer no opinion on Captain Christie's conduct. With regard to his age, I regret that I had been misinformed.

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) A. H. Layard

MR. CHRISTIE'S REPLY TO THE PRECEDING.

Durie, March 7, 1855.

Sir, - You had no previous note from me : I have brothers, who may have written. The character of an officer, as such, is very valuable to him. Being reported as past seventy in the House of Commons, and unfit for service, may be a sort of ruin to him. I trust to your generosity and honour. I have no authority from my brother to write. Capt. Christie, R.N., is the officer alluded to : I am his eldest brother.

I remain,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) C.M.CHRISTIE.

A. H. Layard, Esq.

To the Editor of the "Morning Herald"

Sir, - My near connection, Captain Peter Christie, R.N., lately in command of the British Transports in the Black Sea, has been detained at Constantinople, by an order from the Admiralty, there

to have the advantage of a Court Martial for the investigation into the state of the port at Balak-[21]lava, and of the discharge of his duties there. He cannot be at home for some time : I therefore consider it my duty to him to make public the enclosed letter from him to Mr. Layard, M.P.

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) JAMES LINDSAY,
Major-General.

21, Berkeley Square, May 7th, 1855.

CAPTAIN CHRISTIE'S LETTER TO MR. LAYARD.

Balaklava, March 26,

1855.

Sir, - I could scarcely believe my eyes when I read that you had declared in your speech delivered in the House of Commons about the 20th ult., that I was above "seventy years of age, suffering from disease, and that the harbour of Balaklava was in disorder in consequence."

Now, sir, I cannot imagine for a moment, that any Member of the House of Commons could make such statements as these without first of all endeavouring to ascertain whether they were correct or not ; nor can I doubt that when he finds he has been misinformed, he will consider it a point of honour to remedy the injury he may have done as soon as possible. I beg to acquaint you, that instead of being above seventy, I am under sixty years of age, and so far from being afflicted with disease of any kind, I have, thank God, been never been a day off duty since I left England, and no man in the Army or Navy could enjoy better health.

With regard to the harbour arrangements, I have had nothing to do with them. They are, and have been, under a Captain and Harbour Master appointed by the Commander-in-Chief, consequently cannot be interfered with by me. This [22] could have been explained to you when you were on the spot, by either Admiral Dundas, Sir Edmund Lyons, or myself. I should have been happy to have done so, and to have given you any information in my power, had you asked me.

I am about to be superseded, but whether in consequence of your statements in the House of Commons or not, I cannot pretend to say - there are no reasons assigned ; but I trust that after the explanations I have given, you will, in justice to me, have no hesitation in stating in the House of Commons how much you have been misinformed with respect to the statements you made relative to me. I shall proceed to London directly I am relieved, and shall hope to hear from you at my Agent's, J. A. Snee., Esq., 6, New Inn, Strand.

I remain, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed) P. CHRISTIE.
A. H. Layard, Esq., House of Commons.

From Correspondent of "Morning Herald," March, 29th, 1855.

Captain Heath, R.N., who is to supersede Captain Christie in charge of the transports, arrived at Balaklava this morning. Captain Christie resigns his function on the 30th, and leaves for England the day after. In spite of Government insinuations to the contrary, Captain Christie has the consolation of knowing, that, as far as the means at his disposal would permit, he has always discharged his duties faithfully and well, and that he leaves here accompanied by the sincere regrets of all the Masters of Transports who have been under his charge. The subscriptions to the Testimonial about to be presented to him by the Masters of Transports out here, already amount to nearly two hundred pounds.

[23] *From Correspondent of "Morning Herald."*

Today Captain Christie, to the regret of all concerned, ceased to act as Principal Transport Agent. He was waited upon the occasion by a deputation from the Masters of Transports, who presented him with a very flattering address.

On quitting the command, Captain Christie took leave of the Transport Service in the following General Memorandum :-

GENERAL MEMORANDUM.

‘Orient’, Balaklava, March 29th,
1855.

“The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty having been pleased to appoint Captain Leopold Heath, Royal Navy, to supersede me as Principal Agent of Transports, I hereby inform you thereof, and you will follow and obey the orders of that officer from and after the 31st inst.

“In taking leave of you, I beg to return you my warmest thanks for the ready attention with which you have invariably met my orders and wishes. I have the greatest gratification in bearing testimony to the noble spirit and zeal which has been displayed by one and all of you, in the execution of the public service, under

trials and circumstances of no ordinary nature, and which has been accomplished by cheerfulness on the part of the officers and crews of your respective ships, and a thorough knowledge of your profession.

" I part from you with regret, and trust that the same good feeling which has actuated you hitherto, will continue under my successor, and that your exertions, in concert with [24] those of Her Majesty's Navy and Army, will soon be crowned with success, in securing to our country a lasting and honourable peace.

"(Signed) P. CHRISTIE
"Captain and Principal Agent.

"To the respective Commanders of Her Majesty's Transports, employed with the Army in the East."

From the "Morning Herald," April 19th, 1855.

Balaklava, March 31st,
1855.

TESTIMONIAL TO CAPTAIN PETER CHRISTIE, R.N.,

LATE PRINCIPAL NAVAL AGENT OF THE TRANSPORTS
EMPLOYED WITH THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

"We, the Masters of Transports employed in the East, having heard with sincere regret of Captain Christie, R.N., being about to resign the important post in connection with the Transport Service, which hitherto he has so ably and faithfully discharged, it was unanimously resolved that, previous to his departure, an Address be presented to him, as some, though a slight, token of the regard and estimation in which he has always been held by us."

The Address having been agreed to, the following gentlemen were chosen as a deputation to present it :-

Captain W. Champion,....."Melbourne"
Captain T. Kyle,....."Pride of the Ocean"
Captain T. Cargill,....."City of London"
Captain T. F. Kruger,....."Lion"
Captain J. H. Withers,....."Sir George Pollock"
Captain G. Franklin,....."Columbo"
Captain Lawrence,....."Orient"

This day the deputation waited upon Captain Christie, when Captain Champion read the Address as follows :-

[25] *To Captain Peter Christie, R.N., Principal Agent of Transports.*

Sir, - We, the undersigned masters of Transports, have learned with much sorrow that you have ceased to be our Principal Agent.

This intelligence has pained us much, and we assure you that we part from you with the deepest regret. Your urbanity of manners, the kindness of your disposition, and your devotedness to the interests of Her Majesty's Government, have been a stimulus to our carrying out your orders in such a manner as we hope has merited your approbation.

The regard you have always manifested to our comforts, as well as your readiness to assist us in all our difficulties, have greatly endeared you to us.

Our connection we had hoped would have continued ; but, as this privilege is denied us, it is with unfeigned regret that we now find ourselves called upon to bid you farewell, and, in so doing, we beg to assure you that you carry with you our kindest regards, our warmest sympathies, and our fervent desire that, in whatever sphere you may be placed, you may secure (as we feel confident you will) those kindly feelings and that warm interest which animates the hearts of us all.

[The above was signed by 68 names.]

To this Address Captain Christie read a reply as follows :-

GENTLEMEN, - I assure you that I feel much gratified and highly honoured at this very flattering mark of your good feeling towards me. An officer may well feel proud at having the good opinion of so highly-respectable a body of gentle- **[26]** men. I have seen a great deal of the transports and their commanders during this expedition, and I will answer for it, a finer set of ships, or a more efficient set of officers commanding them, never left England.

With scarcely one exception, I have had the greatest satisfaction in the whole of you.

I am about to leave you, and I have no doubt you will continue to show the same zeal and assiduity with my successor that you have with me.

I wish you all health and happiness, and a happy meeting with all your friends and families in Old England before long. Once more thanking you for this mark of your good feeling, I wish you all good bye.

(Signed)

P.CHRISTIE.

March 31, 1855.

From "Morning Herald's" Special Correspondent.

Balaklava, 21st April,

1855.

Captain Christie has arrived at Kamiesch : he is to be tried by Court Martial on the 24th. No reporters, I am told, will be allowed to be present. He is to be tried principally for the loss of the "Prince", with which he has as much to do as I have. One of the most important of Captain Christie's witnesses has been sent down to Constantinople."

[27]

From the same.

English Camp, Sebastopol, 25th April,

1855.

Captain Christie's trial was to have taken place to-day at Kamiesch, but the worry and mental excitement of the last few days have, I am sorry to say, been too much for him, and he is now delirious and dangerously ill. Of course, under such circumstances, the trial is now postponed indefinitely.

From the same.

Of Admiral Boxer's Assistant (Captain Christie) we can scarcely trust ourselves to write, for we fear that gallant officer, esteemed and appreciated by everybody but his calumniators, has fallen a victim to their unsparing and unfounded misrepresentations.

"Morning Herald," 17th May, 1855.

THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN CHRISTIE, R.N.

We deeply regret to have it in our power to confirm the intelligence of the death of Captain Peter Christie. He expired on the 1st of May. We have no desire to use strong language towards those who must, if they have any consciences, bitterly deplore the untimely death of this officer ; but we cannot refrain from repeating the language of Sir James Graham before the Sebastopol Committee on Monday last, that he was a "broken-hearted man." We believe – that is we hope – that none will lament the loss of Captain Christie, and the melancholy circumstances under which he has departed this life, more than those who misrepresented him and his acts,

almost even to persecution ; and we think Sir James Graham will be sorry that he yielded so readily to unseemly clamour and unfounded calumny against Captain Christie, and added to the cup of his misfortunes, by ordering him to be tried by Court Martial, when we do not find that the Commander-in-Chief on the station deemed it just towards him to put that gallant officer through such an ordeal. Captain Christie, perhaps, "had not devil enough" to bear up against his calumniators ; but it will be remembered that he has not left the world without putting on public record a refutation of the gross and unwarrantable misrepresentations of Mr. Layard, in the following letter, published in the *Herald* on the 10th inst., and which we reprint today. – (See page 21).

[28] A Parliamentary return, dated Admiralty, April 18, 1855, has been in the hands of Mr. Layard, and he must have seen therein the following statement :-

"Captain Peter Christie, aged 58, sea service ; as Volunteer and Midshipman, 6 years, 3 months, 1 week, and 3 days ; as passed Midshipman and Mate, 2 years, 6 months, 1 week, and 1 day ; Lieutenant, 4 years, 7 months, and 2 weeks ; Commander, 3 years, 3 months, 3 weeks, and 6 days ; and this exclusive of Coast Guard Service." Mr. Layard must have seen that, by age and service, Captain Christie was at least a very experienced officer.

Notwithstanding Mr. Layard had this information on the 18th of April, not one word did he say in correction of his mis-statements regarding Captain Christie. Again, on the 10th of May, the letter (of page 21) was published in the *Herald*, and we believe it was also published in the *Times* of the following day, sent by Major-General Lindsay, a connection of Captain Christie. It was at that time reported that Captain Christie was dying ; but no retraction, no explanation, no "apology," from Mr. Layard !

Mr. Layard had a third special opportunity afforded him to withdraw his false statements against Captain Christie. After Sir James Graham's examination on Monday last, when Mr. Layard himself heard Sir James Graham's account of the circumstances under which Captain Christie was selected for employment, and also of the services of that gallant officer, when Sir James at the same time stated that Captain Christie was a "broken-hearted" man.

But no ! Mr. Layard has not evinced that generosity of feeling – that spirit of fair-play and justice – that manliness – which is the usual character of Englishmen, high and low, rich and poor, gentle and simple *to state in the house of* [29] *Commons how much he has been misinformed with respect to the statements he made relative to Captain Christie.*

The "trust" of the dying officer was in Mr. Layard's sense of "justice."

From "Morning Herald," May ---

We feel too sensitively the lamentable end of poor Captain Christie – one of the most gallant, clever, and single-minded officers of the Navy – to trust ourselves to write on the circumstances of his untimely fate, and the base persecution, even unto death, that he suffered. We can only refer to the short but eloquent notice from our Special correspondent from Sebastopol (May 3rd), and our Parliamentary report. Mr. Layard's "too late" explanation was received with the scorn, contempt, and disgust that it merited ; and Sir James Graham's indignant vindication also was a "too late" effort, and smacked more of political attack than ingenuous defence. Between them they have done their worst, and now

"Him they have buried whom they helped to kill."

From "Morning Herald's" Special Correspondent.

HEIGHTS OF SEBASTOPOL, 3RD MAY, 1855

THE Funeral of poor Captain Christie took place to-day at Kamiesch : it was attended by a large number of officers, both English and French, and very many of our Transport Captains, by whom Captain Christie was sincerely liked, and by whom he is deeply regretted.

Will no one interested in Captain Christie's reputation, ask, why the Government selected him as the object of their vengeance, and instituted no inquiry into the conduct of [30] others, who were far more culpable ? Captain Christie, who never failed in his duty, or hindered the duty of others, has been persecuted to death. This is indeed Government justice.

("Morning Herald.")

From the "Times"

CAPTAIN CHRISTIE, late Principal Agent of transports, died at Kazatch Bay on the 1st May, on board the "Gertrude" transport. Admiral Sir E. Lyons sent the "Spiteful" steam-vessel round, for the purpose of conveying such of the Captains of Transports as wished to be present at the funeral : a large number availed themselves of the opportunity. The chief mourners were Captain Marsh, R.N.; Mr Pritchard, Commander-in-Chief's Secretary : Lieutenants Hutchinson and Goss ; and Dr. Costello. Admirals Lyons and Steuart, and a large number of Naval Officers, were present.

"Morning Herald," May 19th

PARLIAMENTARY REPORT.

Mr. FERGUS would ask the indulgence of the House while he proceeded to rescue the character of a gallant officer from great and unmerited obloquy. (Hear, hear). It had been stated in that House, that the harbour of Balaklava had been intrusted to Captain Christie – an old man, upwards of seventy years of age, who, from infirmity, was unable to leave his ship for six or seven days together, without endangering his life ; the question was then asked, - such a man being in command of the harbour of Balaklava, who could wonder at the state in which it remained ? Now, what were the facts ? He had never known that officer to have any physical complaint ; he was fifty-seven years of age when he [31] left this country for Balaklava – (hear, hear) ; and he was of vigorous and athletic constitution. Captain Christie was never in command of the harbour of Balaklava – he was in command of the transports outside the harbour, and he was always where his duty called him. There was every allowance to be made for a gentleman who was, with a single eye, conscientiously engaged in making investigations for the good the country, for any false information he might collect ; but that gentleman was bound, after making incorrect statements, when facts were explained, to give his statements full and proper contradiction and explanation. (Cheers). In February last a letter was written to the gentleman who made the statement in question :-

“Sir,- I read, with much regret, your statements with regard to Captain Christie. A reference to the Admiralty books would easily show you that he entered the service in 1813, being then twelve years old. I shall not trouble you with a detail of his services, but you will find that he has always been accounted an energetic and pains-taking officer. (Hear, hear). At Balaklava, having been ordered outside the harbour along with the transports, previous to the gale of the 14th November, he saved the ship in which he was (the ‘Melbourne’) through his own exertions, in cutting away the masts. He also three times sent in a Lieutenant to beg the Senior Naval Officer to allow the ‘Prince’ to go into harbour, as she had only one anchor, but that was refused, and she was lost. You will at once perceive that your statements have placed an active and meritorious officer, fifty-seven years of age, in the eyes of the country in the position of an imbecile dotard. (Loud cries of hear.) Trusting to your known generosity of character I cannot doubt that you will publicly [32] correct a mistaken statement so publicly made. I am sure you will excuse the feeling of a sister and the trespass on your time, on behalf of an absent brother.” (Cheers.)

Now, he wished, though not exactly to the question, to say, that the statement with regard to the “Prince” transport was

perfectly correct, and would have been confirmed by Captain Christie himself had he lived to take his trial by Court Martial ; it could be confirmed by the right Honourable Gentleman who was at the time at the head of the Admiralty. Another letter was written to the Honourable Gentleman by a brother of Captain Christie, which bore truth on the face of it. These letters were in the possession of the Honourable Gentleman more than ten weeks ; the relatives of Captain Christie remained in suspense ; but it was not suspense to Captain Christie – it was anguish. (Hear.) Captain Christie was keenly alive to his professional position; his reputation was dearer to him than life – he used no exaggeration when he used that expression : that anguish and anxiety did for the gallant officer what years and active service could not have done. The refutation of the error did not come, and he broke down in the midst of his duties, and had gone where neither slander nor praise could reach him. (Cheers.) He begged to ask the Honourable Member for Aylesbury whether he received these letters, and what answer he had given them ?

Mr. LAYARD. – I really feel ashamed, when great interests are at stake, and when the excitement upon this war is at its pitch, on account of what has taken place in the East, that the time of the House should be taken up in questions of this kind (oh, oh), which involve personal matters. I ask Honourable Members – perhaps I should say, one gallant gentleman in [33] particular – whether they intend to renew to-night the unseemly scene which took place the other night ? (Oh, oh.) Those Honourable Gentlemen are bringing on the House great discredit. (Oh, oh, and laughter.) There is a feeling gaining ground in this country (cries of “question”). The question is the adjournment of this House. I say, a feeling is rising up in this country that the time of this House is taken up and trifled with, and that this House is made the arena of personal altercation. That feeling is gaining ground, and I warn Honourable and Gallant Gentlemen opposite (laughter) that that feeling may gain a ground too wide and too vast in the country. Now, Sir, I will answer the question which the Honourable Member has put to me, although the proceeding is not quite regular ; for if the Honourable Member had spoken to me before he raised this question, I would have given him such information as would have enabled him to place it in different terms before the House. He has, no doubt unintentionally, misquoted my speech altogether. I have referred to three or four newspapers – if I may be allowed to refer to newspapers in this House – and I have compared their reports. I do not pretend to recollect the exact words I used, but referring to the *Morning Herald*, the paper that has attacked me the most, I am represented to say, that Captain Christie was about seventy years of age – other papers make me say upwards of seventy years. I will read from the *Times* what I said :-

“Who is at the head of the transports at Balaklava ? Captain Christie, an old gentleman upwards of seventy years of age ; a gallant gentleman, no doubt, but he cannot leave his ship after dark for fear of a catarrh, which might endanger his existence. I know he is often five or six days without [34]being able to land at Balaklava Are you then surprised at the state in which Balaklava was ?”

During the time I was at Balaklava, on board the Agamemnon, I had almost daily opportunities of seeing Captain Christie. Against his private character I have nothing whatever to say. He appeared to me to be a man about seventy years of age, and I had frequently heard a high authority say he was not a man competent to fill the position he held. That opinion I formed myself strongly. I had a right to form it. At that time the existence of thousands was dependent on those who were placed at the heads of departments ; and I, as a Member of Parliament and an Englishman, had a perfect right to express my opinion to the country of any man at the head of any of those departments. There is no one impartial man, or one not wishing to make political capital out of such matters, could venture to say that any thing more was to be inferred from my remarks, than that Captain Christie was an old man - too old to be at the head of his department. I did not know whether he was sixty or seventy years of age (Hear, hear.) By his appearance I was justified in saying he was about that age, as I might express my opinion of the age of any man in this House, and be mistaken. A few days after, I received a letter from Captain Christie’s brother. Now no one is more ready in this House to atone for an error - if I have reason to believe it to be an error (oh, oh) - than I am. When a gentleman out of doors addresses an unseemly and unbecoming letter to a Member of Parliament, and publishes that letter in the newspapers, I apprehend, then, the duty of a Member of Parliament ceases. Now, what was this letter ? It opened with a statement contrary to fact :-

“If your speech has been correctly reported, I have to in- [35]form you that you have stated what is contrary to fact, and have thereby done what you can to injure an absent man.”

It may be in the recollection of the House, there was a change of Ministry going on, and great excitement in the country, and I had not an opportunity of making a statement in the House ; and, after receiving such a letter, I very much doubt whether I should have made any statement ; and when I saw that letter published in the newspapers, I might fairly have considered myself as relieved from any further notice of it. I believe I did afterwards receive a letter, whether from that same gentleman or another I cannot say, but I remember I did write an answer to it, and received a reply from the gentleman to whom it was addressed, to say that he was the person who had written to me. I have looked among my papers, but am

sorry to say I cannot find the letter. Some time afterwards I received a letter from Captain Christie - that letter was written under a misconception of facts. No doubt he was informed I said he was seventy years of age. I never said it (hear, hear) ; the only thing I said was, he was unable to undergo exposure on account of the state of his health. The moment I received that letter I wrote a reply, directed, as he wished, to his agent, J. H. Snee :-

"9 LITTLE RYDER STREET, April 17, 1855.

"SIR, - I have to acknowledge the receipt of your note, dated Balaklava, 26th March. I had already received a communication from your brother on the subject of your age. Had that communication been worded in a becoming manner, I should at once have acknowledged my error in the House of Commons ; but, as it was not so worded, and as your brother thought fit to publish it in a newspaper, I did [36] not consider it incumbent upon me to take any notice of it. With regard to your suffering from disease - such a statement was not made by me. I argued that a man of your age could not perform the duties imposed upon an officer in your position, without running the risk of injury to his health.

"With regard to your management of the harbour and the shipping in it, that is now the subject of Parliamentary inquiry, and I have no doubt that if you will inform Mr. Roebuck of your arrival in England, he will summon you before the Committee, and you will then have an opportunity of clearing yourself from any imputation that may have been thrown upon you.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant."

"Captain CHRISTIE."

I sent it to the address in question, but whether it was forwarded to Captain Christie, or not, I cannot say ; nor do I know what became of the letter. Now, sir, with regard to Captain Christie's position in the harbour of Balaklava, I may, perhaps, be allowed to refer to the evidence taken before the Committee. There is considerable doubt on the subject. The evidence of the witnesses clashes with regard to his powers. I myself formed my opinion from what I saw. I have a right to do so, and to express that opinion. I have refrained from giving any personal opinion on the evidence, leaving that task to the Committee ; but if I can ask Honourable Gentlemen for any justice or fair play, I would ask them whether there is one word in the extract which authorised a Court Martial to be held on Captain Christie ? (Hear, hear.) Because I said a man was seventy years of age, is that a reason for trying him by Court Martial? And now I actually find myself charged with the murder of Captain Christie. [37]

The Right Honourable Gentleman behind me (Sir James Graham), when in the committee-room the other day, in a tone and manner that no one could mistake – and I appeal to the other Members to confirm me – when answering a question turned to me and said, “Captain Christie is dead – a broken-hearted man.” (Hear, hear.) Yes, it was well said by a Right Honourable Gentleman opposite, if you would trust a bad case to good hands, go there. (Hear, and laughter.) Who was responsible for Captain Christie’s trial ? What did the Right Honourable Gentleman tell the committee that Captain Christie was put on his trial for ? Because I said he was an old man ? No, but because the Right Honourable Gentleman at the head of the Admiralty thought he might be considered guilty of causing the loss of the “Prince,” and of landing Turkish troops at Balaklava which ought to have been landed at Eupatoria. In what I may have said about the loss of the “Prince,” I always felt sure that Captain Christie had nothing to do with it. I was there the day after the loss of the “Prince,” and I was told by everybody that the “Prince” could not come into Balaklava. Now, with regard to landing the Turks at Balaklava instead of at Eupatoria, until the Right Honourable Gentleman said so before the Committee, I never heard a word about it. Captain Christie was sent to be tried on those two issues. I never raised them. If Captain Christie has been an ill-treated man, who ill-treated him ? It was the First Lord of the Admiralty (Sir J. Graham) who first listened to those matters which must have come from other sources, and not from imputations I cast upon him. I may be mistaken as to Captain Christie’s age. (Laughter). I remember a remarkable mistake as to ages, and I will appeal to the Right Honourable Gentleman who [38] corrected that mistake.

In 1843, when a revolution broke out in Servia, Lord Aberdeen, who was then Minister for Foreign Affairs, justified, to a certain extent the non-interference of this country, and the carrying out of the Russian policy, on the ground that the Prince Stirbey, who was then on the throne, was too young a man, who had been taken from obscurity, and who had no claim to his position. The Right Honourable Gentleman then pointed out that this young man was forty years of age. The matter involved a question of great interest, but was Lord Aberdeen attacked or accused on account of this mistake ? But, when I make a mistake, you attack me as if impelled to do so by political or party reasons. (Hear.) I admit the mistake about the age ; but if you think that by crushing me – a poor man, a man of no weight in this House – you may succeed ; but you will not crush the cause with which I am identified. (Hear, hear.) You are here to shout me down because I attack a system by which you, Honourable and Gallant Members, sit in the House and rise in the ranks of the Army without encountering the dangers and fighting the battles of your country.

(Oh, oh, and cheers.) You may hunt me down, but the country will not stand it. (Oh.) Honourable Gentlemen may repeat their cries, but I warn them again, that sooner or later – (here the close of the sentence was drowned in cries of oh !) Now, sir, with regard to Captain Christie, no man can be more grieved that I am at his death. If I could have done anything to save him I should gladly have done it, quite as readily as if he was my nearest and dearest relative. But I content I had a right to say, as a Member of Parliament, he was incompetent to hold his position, if I thought so ; and I say a Member of Parliament has no right to be exposed to attacks as I [39] have been more than once, for doing his duty – for the country will believe that such attacks are only made for party purposes (Oh, oh, and cheers.)

Mr. FERGUS, in explanation, said the Honourable Gentleman had totally misunderstood his question. The letter he referred to was not a letter from Captain Christie, but a letter from Mrs. Boswell, Captain Christie's sister, forwarded by himself to the Hon. Gentleman on the 28th February. (Hear.)

Sir J. PAKINGTON. – As a member of the Sebastopol Committee, I feel bound to take some notice of the evidence given by the Right honourable Gentleman (Sir J. Graham). I must say I never heard a more unfair representation of that evidence than that which has been given by the Honourable Member for Aylesbury. I heard the Right Honourable allude to the then supposed death of Captain Christie, for it had not then been ascertained, and the Right Honourable, with a depth of feeling which I think did him honour, said he believed at that moment that Captain Christie was dead of a broken heart. I heard no more from the Right Honourable Gentleman than what a man of good feeling could have said – (hear) – who was giving evidence with reference to Captain Christie at a moment of such melancholy interest. I cannot refrain from adding my very deep regret at the course the Honourable Member for Aylesbury has taken on this subject. He says this matter is brought forward for party purposes, and that there is an endeavour to crush him. Let me tell him, that if he is crushed, he will have crushed himself. (Loud cheers.) He will crush himself, as any man will crush himself, who brings forward these loose charges against public servants under circumstances which prevent him from substantiating those charges. The [40] Honourable Gentleman is a man of great ability. He is a man able to do good service, and I hope he will do good service ; but if anything will prevent his rendering good service, it will be the want of precision and the want of care with which he ventures upon these charges. (Hear, hear.) How does this matter stand now about Captain Christie ? To an officer, professional character is everything. The Honourable Gentleman comes down, and says, in reference to an officer, he is seventy years of age, and too old for

service, being unable to leave his vessel for six or seven days at a time for fear of catching a catarrh, and that he is unable to perform the public service. He then receives letters both from the sister and from the brother of Captain Christie. He receives that touching letter, which has been read by the Honourable gentleman who so ably brought forward this matter. (Hear.) He receives a letter also from the brother. Last of all, he receives a letter from Captain Christie himself – after receiving which, I confess, I should have thought that no man of honour would have done less than acknowledge his error. (Hear.) I regret the Honourable gentleman did not feel, after receiving that letter, pointing out and correcting the errors into which he had fallen, that his only course was to have frankly acknowledged in the House the errors into which he had fallen. (Hear.) I take the course I am not taking with great regret – I speak without any hostile feeling in the matter – but I am sure Honourable Members will agree with me in saying, that the Honourable Member will best consult his own public character by not making any such charges as these in future. (Hear.)

Sir J. GRAHAM, - Sir, I am extremely anxious that this discussion, which is of a most painful character, should not be **[41]** unnecessarily prolonged. But I must say it is not the character alone of the Honourable Member for Aylesbury that is concerned ; a debt of justice is due to the memory of a gallant man. (Hear, hear.) And, sir, I beg here to state that no transaction has for a long time given me such acute and deep pain as this very transaction we are now discussing ; for though it is no longer possible to render a tribute of justice, which might soothe the feelings of a gallant man now no more ; still there is a debt of justice due to those relatives who feel the greatest interest in all that happens. Sir, I alone am responsible for the original appointment of Captain Christie. He was unknown to me except by reputation. He bore a high and spotless character in his gallant profession ; he had served well and honourably, and he was recommended to me as fully competent for the situation to which I appointed him. I believe the first serious question raised with respect to his competency was raised in this House by the Honourable Member for Aylesbury. Certainly, Sir, I shall not attempt to give evidence as to the precise words used by the Honourable Member on that occasion; but it will be in the recollection of the House that the allusions to Captain Christie by the Honourable Member were very disparaging – namely, that he was an old man, a sickly man (No, and cheers), and as such was unfit for his duty (No.) I certainly understood the Honourable Member to say he was so liable to catarrh as to be unable to leave his ship for many days consecutively ; and I leave it to the House to judge, whether the tone and substance of what the Honourable

Member said did not leave an impression, that an unfit person had been appointed at a crisis of public affairs to fill a most important situation ? I have said this matter deeply grieved me. I had heard too much clamour with regard to this officer, [42] and I ordered inquiry to be instituted after that debate by the Commander-in-Chief on the Naval Station, whether, in his opinion, Captain Christie had effectually and well discharged the duties of the station to which he had been appointed. Two faults, and only two, to the best of my recollection, were alleged with respect to the manner Captain Christie had conducted his duties. The first related to the discretion exercised by him with reference to the transports outside the harbour on the 14th of November, the day of the heavy storm, and incidentally another question arose, which the Right Honourable Baronet alluded to, whether Captain Christie had not made a serious mistake with reference to ordering a portion of the Turkish troops bound from Varna to the Crimea, to go to Balaklava instead of Eupatoria. Having received an answer and an inquiry, instead of handing Captain Christie over to the Committee on which the Honourable Member sits, I thought it more just, and on the whole better, to submit the conduct of a gallant officer to the constituted tribunal of his brother officers, that they should investigate the charges and pronounce an opinion on Captain Christie's conduct. This I thought, would be better than to submit Captain Christie to the ordeal the Honourable Member wished him to sustain. For that I am responsible. I did not wish Captain Christie to return to England to be examined, but that he should be tried by Court Martial. Here is the point. I had reason to believe that the bitter and cruel suspense in which Captain Christie was placed, - finding himself superseded and ordered to be tried by Court Martial, coupled with the statements made in that House so disparaging to him, - broke the heart of a gallant man ; and when in the Committee, I said I did believe that Captain Christie's death was in consequence of the [43] circumstances I have stated. The Honourable Member says, when he received a letter from Captain Christie's brother, stating circumstances so minute as to prove the errors into which he had fallen, that he did not answer that letter. And what is his allegation ?

Why, that when he received a letter from Captain Christie's brother, who was on the spot, correcting two errors as contrary to fact, and injurious to the character of an absent man, he found that letter couched in terms of offensive as to preclude him from doing justice to that absent man. Now, I appeal to this House to say if that is not a dangerous doctrine to put forward, coupled with the facts of the case. It is a doctrine the Honourable Member on reflection will not, I feel assured, adhere to. (Hear, hear.) With respect to what fell from me on the Committee, I sincerely thank the right Honourable Gentleman (Sir J. Packington) for doing me

justice. I brought charges against no one. I felt regret for what was demanded of me. I said, and looked steadily at the Honourable Member, that Captain Christie died a broken-hearted man. I considered that what the Honourable Member said in the house of Captain Christie was unjust to a gentleman. I believe the statements had the worst effect on the health of a gallant officer, and I do think that the lesson ought not to be thrown away with reference to future charges ; that allegations against the character of absent men ought not to be brought forward on light grounds, and that when errors are proved to have been committed, there will be no hesitation in frankly acknowledging them. (Loud cheers.)

Admiral BERKELEY thought he might be considered as good a judge of the character of Captain Christie and of his professional abilities as the Honourable Gentleman ; and he [44] felt bound to say, though the right Honourable Gentleman, the Member for Carlisle, had taken the responsibility of the appointment, that he shared that responsibility, for the Right Honourable Baronet had consulted the board before making it. No man more desired a Court Martial than Captain Christie himself. It ought not to be said that the Right Honourable Baronet, in carrying out the rules of the service, was in any way the cause of the death of the gallant officer in question ; rather let it be said of those who malignantly attacked a man behind his back. Why had not the Honourable Member, when called upon by that touching letter of Captain Christie's sister done that which every honourable man would have done, answered the letter and relieved her mind ? The efficiency of the service was what the Admiralty looked to in their appointment ; and he must say an unprejudiced person would have said, judging from the appearance of Captain Christie, that he was rather forty-five than seventy.

From "Dundee Courier," May 23rd.

That the party doing the injury will avail himself of the first opportunity of making suitable amends : this is no more than what we expect from any man of an honourable mind, even in the very humblest ranks of society, much more from one occupying a position of influence and authority. No man lowers himself by acknowledging a fault. *Humanum est errare*. But every man is expected to express his regret in reparation of an injury which he has unintentionally inflicted.

We were not disposed to look severely on the first case which occurred in the House of Commons, when Mr. Layard was shewn to have made use of inaccurate information, although we regretted that he had fallen into such a mistake, [45] and much more that he did not make a more graceful retreat. On that occasion he was

baited by a band of military men, who evidently fancied that their craft was in danger, and who were only too glad to get a hit at one whom they looked upon as the enemy of their profession.

It is surprising, however, that a man of Mr. Layard's literary attainments, and extensive experience in public life, should not yet have learned what is due to himself; for he seems not to be aware, that in such cases he is doing far more injury to his own reputation, than to that of the persons whom he unjustly accuses.

But the case of Captain Christie, late Principal Agent for Transports at Balaklava, which was brought before the House of Commons on Friday evening by Mr. Fergus, the Member for Fifeshire, in a speech remarkable for its temperate and unvarnished statements, puts Mr. Layard in a very unfavourable position with the public. It is very evident that Captain Christie was much misrepresented in the account given of his conduct by Mr. Layard and others, and that he was unjustly blamed for errors and misfortunes for which he was in no degree responsible. The appeal made to Mr. Layard in the letter from Mrs. Boswell, the sister of Captain Christie, was such as no man of right feeling, we think, could have resisted, and yet Mr. Layard allowed that letter to lie unanswered, and even unacknowledged. – See letter, page 31.

Who will say that this letter was not in all respects worthy of the affection of a sister, and the delicacy of a lady? Mr. Layard ought not to have allowed the delay of a single post before addressing to that lady an expression of his regret for the pain he had occasioned to her and the other members of Captain Christie's family, with an assurance that he found [46] on inquiry that he had wronged the character of her brother, he would take the earliest opportunity of repairing it.

He did no such thing, however; and now, he tries to shelter himself, that the letter from Captain Christie's *brother*, which he subsequently received, was such as to preclude him from noticing the complaints made to him: this, we say, will not avail. Mr. Layard is a public man, and not over nice in the use which he takes of the liberty which his position gives him, but he is not the less amenable to the laws which regulate all well ordered society.

The injury done to an honourable man, sensitively alive to his professional character, proved too much for his health, previously robust; and he is now removed alike beyond the censure of the praise of Mr. Layard. But Captain Christie was a *public* servant, and died in the *public service* – hence it becomes the imperative duty of the public to see that justice is done to his memory. Certainly the House of Commons shewed on Friday evening a praiseworthy desire to repair the injury which Mr. Layard had done; and it will be some consolation to the friends of the deceased, under their bereavement, that in the great assembly of the representatives of the people, the opinion of those whose opinion

was most valuable, was freely and unreservedly given in behalf of one who appears to have stood deservedly high in his profession, and who enjoyed the respect and esteem of all who knew him.

"Morning Herald," May 18th

We find the following epitome of the services of the late Captain Christie in the "Naval Biography." A reference to this popular work would have corrected Mr. Layard's ignor- [47] ance, if it could not have prevented him from slandering a good and gallant officer :-

"Peter Christie, son of James Christie, Esq. of Durie, Fifeshire, by Mary Turner, daughter of the Honourable Charles Barclay Maitland, grand daughter of the sixth Earl of Lauderdale, and first cousin of the late Rear Admiral Sir Frederick Lewis Maitland, K.C.B.

"This officer entered the Navy, April 13th, 1810, as First Class Volunteer, on board the 'Emerald,' 36, commanded by his relative, Captain F.L. Maitland, under whom he assisted at the capture of the 'L'Augusta,' privateer, of 18 guns and 126 men, April 6th, 1811 - attained the rating of Midshipman, November 8th following, and continued to serve, omitting a period of fifteen months, from February, 1812, to May, 1813, when we find him in the 'Tiger,' 74, Captain John Halliday, on board the 'Goliah,' 74, 'Boyne,' 98, and 'Bellerophon,' 74, latterly off the coasts of America and France, until September 1815. Mr Christie was in the last mentioned ship when Napoleon Bonaparte surrendered ; was next employed until August, 1818, under Captain T. Walker, in the 'Albion,' 'Queen,' and 'Northumberland,' 74's on the Home Station ; he then joined on the coast of Africa, where he assisted in the boats at the capture of many slave vessels, the 'Tartar,' 36, Commodore Sir G. Ralph Collier, of which ship having passed his examination in 1816, he was confirmed a Lieutenant, September 9th 1820.

"Being next appointed, July 6th, 1824 to the 'Cambrian,' 48, Captain W. Rowan Hamilton, he shared in numerous boat affairs with the pirates of the Greek archipelago, and in particular on January 31st, 1825, bore a part in a very gallant conflict, in which the British lost six men killed, and thirteen [48] wounded. For his services as First of the 'Cambrian,' at the battle of Navarino, Mr. Christie obtained a Commander's Commission, dated October 22nd, 1827. He was subsequently employed in the Coast Guard, from March 19th, 1835, until March, 1838, and served in command of the 'Rose,' 18, on the Spanish and Brazilian coasts from August 3rd, 1838, until Posted, November 23rd, 1841."

"Glasgow Daily News," Monday, May 21st, 1855

When we previously referred to the affecting case of our countryman, Captain Christie, we regarded him merely as an injured Scottish officer, personally unknown to us : we now revert to the subject with feelings of deeper interest than we can express. On looking over the details of his biography, we perceive we have had the advantage of being long and intimately acquainted with him, while he was Commodore Rowan Hamilton's First Lieutenant, on board the "Cambrian." Brave, intelligent, active, kind and courteous, he was respected and beloved by all, whether high or low, with whom he had intercourse. Like numberless other British travellers, we have spent many pleasant hours in Captain (then Lieutenant) Christie's company, on the "Blue Egean." Had he been allowed to return to England, he would, in all probability, have been now alive with his professional character completely vindicated. Mr. Layard stated that he often heard from high authority, on board the "Agamemnon," that Captain Christie was not a man competent to fill the station he occupied. It was on board the "Agamemnon," too, that Mr. Layard wrote his letter respecting Admiral Dundas, and probably had formed his opinions from what he heard from the same "high authority" there. Sir James Graham wrote to the "high [49] authority" to inquire whether or not Captain Christie had efficiently discharged his duties - the reply was in the negative; and in confirmation of it, two special charges were alleged, respecting which Mr. Layard says he believes the one entirely unfounded, and the other he never before heard of. Had Captain Christie been permitted to return to England, his testimony, we think would have thrown light on many points which the British public ought to know. A dispassionate view of the whole affair must satisfy any one, that blame is to be laid neither at the door of Mr. Layard, nor even of Sir James Graham, but of the "high authority" who spoke of Captain Christie disparagingly, and afterwards alleged charges which, even if unfounded, were sufficient to prevent that officer coming to England, to tell *who* were directly or indirectly answerable for the loss of the "Prince," &c. &c. &c. - *Haec hactenus.*

To the Editor of the "Morning Herald."

SIR, - From your kindness in inserting former communications relative to my late lamented brother, Captain Christie, and from the straight-forward and manly manner in which you have defended him, when a large portion of the press was running him down, I am induced to hope that you will give a place in your columns to the following remarks :-

I observe that Mr. Layard characterises the letter I addressed to him on the 23rd February, and which you did me the favour to insert in the *Morning Herald* on the 9th March, as unbecoming, and

he seems to complain of its having been published in a newspaper. I can only say that it was not published for a fortnight after it was sent to him, during [50] which period he had ample opportunity to have contradicted the misstatements he had made, had he felt so inclined ; and considering that my absent brother, whose professional reputation I knew to be dearer to him than life itself, had been grossly misrepresented, I think my letter can hardly be reckoned either undeserved or unbecoming : and I am sure my sister's letter, which Mr. Layard had not even the common courtesy to acknowledge, was written in a style the reverse of uncourteous. But whatever may have been the tenor of these letters, an officer three thousand miles off was in no way responsible for it. Mr. Layard had made statements affecting the character of that officer, and as soon as he was made aware that those statements were incorrect, he was bound in honour and in common honesty to have contradicted as publicly as he had made them.

Mr. Layard now asserts that he did not state that Captain Christie was suffering from disease : his words were (as I saw them reported) that "Captain Christie's health was so impaired that he could not leave his ship after nightfall without getting a catarrh, and was often five or six days without being able to land at Balaklava." Whatever may have been Mr. Layard's meaning, these words certainly imply disease and unfitness for duty : in opposition to that statement we have Captain Christie's word. (and I thank God that truth was ever on *his* lips) that he had "never been a day off duty since he left England, and no man in the Army or Navy could enjoy better health." I would now leave Mr. Layard to his own reflections, and I trust he may profit by them, although for the present I am sure they would not be of the pleasantest, if he knew the deep affliction his reckless statements have caused.

[51] Whether it was just to supersede an old and meritorious officer unheard, and on account of random statements made in the House of commons, and which statements have now been proved to be utterly unfounded ; or whether it was generous in those who knew or ought to have known, who was responsible for the state of the harbour of Balaklava, to stand by and hear an innocent man accused, without saying one word in his defence, - whether this was fair and English-like, I shall not pretend to say.

With regard to the Court Martial, Captain Christie courted that, knowing that his character would be safe in the hands of his brother officers, and he looked forward to the trial as the only means of dispelling the mean and slanderous calumnies with which he had been assailed. I believe there is but one feeling throughout both services, as to the gross and cruel injustice my poor brother has met with ; and, had the trial taken place, I have reason to believe that it would have resulted in a triumphant acquittal.

I trust that the evidence that would have been given at that trial may yet be taken, and that the proper authorities, in justice to the memory of a much injured officer, may see it to be consistent with their duty to make it public.

That evidence may, perhaps, answer the question which is now beginning to be loudly asked, and to which the public will expect an answer, Who was responsible for the state of the harbour of Balaklava ? It is already on evidence that Captain Christie had no charge - who, then, had ? And who (if any one) was responsible for the loss of the transports on the 14th November ? I believe that all in the East did their best in the very trying circumstances under which they were [52] placed ; but if blame is attachable to any, it is but fair to others that it should be placed on the right shoulders.

I am,
Yours, much obliged and faithfully,
(Signed) N. T. CHRISTIE

KEPPLESTONE, May 21st, 1855.

To the Editor of the "Morning Herald."

SIR, - As my dear brother, Captain P. Christie, R.N., did not live to disprove, by Court Martial, the accusations brought against him, I request that you will insert the following extracts from a letter of his to me, of the 4th and 7th January, by which the public may see, that so far from being to blame for the loss of the "Prince," he did all he could to obtain for her a safe berth ; and that the transports being outside the harbour of Balaklava at the time of the disastrous gale, was a measure of precaution then deemed necessary by the Commander-in-Chief.

Yours truly,
C. M. CHRISTIE

DURIE, 22nd May, 1855.

E X T R A C T S

"BALAKLAVA, January 4th, 1855.

"MY DEAR CHARLES, - . . . I never saw a more severe gale than that of the 14th November. . . . Only save the 'Melbourne' by cutting her masts away The 'Prince' and a magazine ship were the two heaviest losses we had ; and the 'Prince,' had the *Powers* acted up to my wishes, would have been saved. Three times did I send in a Lieutenant to the Senior Naval Officer in Balaklava, to beg [53] of him to allow the 'Prince' to go in, as she had only *one* anchor ; but it was refused, and she was lost."

"January 7th, 1855.

"I had a good reason for ordering the 'Resolute' out of Balaklava harbour. At that time things looked so very unfavourable, that it was doubtful whether we should be able to hold Balaklava or not, and we were within an ace of leaving it altogether. Consequently, I was obliged to send a number of vessels outside, and went myself and anchored with the 'Melbourne' in the middle of them.

"I enclose you a letter I had from the Quartermaster-General, in answer to one I wrote on the subject.

"Ever affectionately yours,
(Signed) P. CHRISTIE."

Copy of Quartermaster-General's Letter

"MY DEAR SIR, - It is quite in accordance with Lord Raglan's views, that you should get all transports not required out of Balaklava harbour, and that magazine ships should be anchored as you propose. It is only as a precautionary measure that these arrangements are suggested - we only prepare for an eventuality which may never come off.

"Perhaps we may not change the place for landing the supplies at all.

Yours, very faithfully,
(Signed) RICHARD AIREY."
TO CAPTAIN CHRISTIE, R.N.

From "Morning Herald," May 22nd

Mr. Layard's backers are delighted at the publication of a [54] letter from that gentleman, fixing upon Sir James Graham the charge of having been the original contributor to poor Captain Christie's untimely fate. There is not question now, as to Captain Christie having been ordered to be tried by Court Martial before Mr. Layard gave utterance to his special calumnies against that unfortunate officer ; and Sir James Graham, it will be seen by our Parliamentary report, has acknowledged his error in a manner that, we fear, it is hopeless to expect Mr. Layard to imitate.

It is well known, however, that Captain Christie had been unmercifully abused by Mr. Layard's friendly organ, a long time previously to the order for the Court Martial ; and it was to such "clamour" of Mr. Layard and his friends that Sir James Graham was so weak-minded as to yield. One of those friends, it now turns out, was Sir Edmund Lyons, the diplomatic Commander-in-Chief, whose

guest Mr. Layard was, and from whose ship that letter was written, confessedly by Mr. Layard, that contained the gross calumny against Sir E. Lyons' superior officer and *friend*, his Commander-in-Chief. It was Sir E. Lyons who removed Captain Christie from his high appointment ; but upon what grounds are not clearly stated. There is no doubt that Sir E. Lyons was responsible for the condition of Balaklava harbour ; for he, as second in command, was dispatched there frequently by his chief, to see that everything was right and efficient in that quarter, Admiral Dundas remaining in his proper place off Sebastopol, before the enemy. *But* did Sir e. Lyons complain before the "clamour" was raised ? Did he even report Captain Christie to his chief ? At all events he summarily removed Captain Christie, and that, too, without subjecting him to trial by Court Martial, and long after the mischief had been done, of which poor [55] Christie had been made the scapegoat. We shall get all the facts out by and by, when we feel assured that our estimate of the *diplomatic* Admiral will be as accurately verified as our prognostications respecting Mr. Layard have been more than fulfilled - at all events, the premature death of Captain Christie is, without doubt, attributable to the unjust treatment he received, and the aspersions cast upon him from official and other quarters. His last letter to Mr. Layard shews how strongly he felt Mr. Layard's misrepresentations.

Extract from a Letter

Captain ----- has been here ; nothing can be stronger than the way in which he spoke of Captain Christie being free from all blame with regard to the transports, and the state of the harbour. He would be quite ready to give evidence as to Captain Christie applying to have the "Prince" taken in before the gale ; and Sir Edmund Lyons was on the *spot*, and could have ordered the "Prince" and "Resolute" in whenever he chose.

Extract from "Record" May 21st

It is now perfectly clear that Captain Christie was an injured man ; that he had nothing to do with the internal arrangements of Balaklava harbour. It seems also to be pretty clearly admitted, that had Captain Christie survived to stand his trial, the result would have been a full and honourable acquittal. This much is due to the memory of a gallant man, who seems to have done his duty to the best of his ability, although during his lifetime he was unjustly left by his superiors as a prey to public accusers, and an angry people in search of a victim.

[56] There is no doubt that Mr. Layard has been very inexact in his information, and very reckless in his charges against individual

officers. The gun-room of the "Agamemnon" has acquired a most undesirable reputation, as a focus of detraction ; and even Sir Edmund Lyons himself has suffered from the tone of conversation, and the style of the letters which issued from beneath his flag, to the disparagement of other officer in the fleet, from Admiral Dundas down to Captain Christie. Mr. Layard in writing, as if from the maintop of the "Agamemnon," retails a letter written by the manager of the *Times* newspaper, as a guest of the Naval Commander-in-Chief, on board the "Britannia."

Mr. Layard tells in that letter, how Admiral Dundas has been heard at his own table, in the confidence of hospitality, to rejoice that the Russian fleet had been put *hors de combat*, by the voluntary act of the Russians in sinking them in the harbour.

It now turns out that no one but a fire-eater, who loved fighting for fighting sake, could have had a different feeling. Up to that moment the whole of the transports were in danger of a surprise from the Russian ships on some favourable occasion, such as would certainly have occurred after the storm of the 14th of November.

It now turns out that both the French and English Admirals were right in thinking, that to go into the harbour, had it been left, and attack the ships under the fire of red-hot shot from the land batteries, would have been an act of suicidal daring, approaching to madness. The probability is, that our ships would have been burned or disabled, whilst the Russians would have saved enough of their own to endanger our transports, and perhaps to cut off the supplies and retreat of the Army.

[57] It was freedom from this menacing danger which caused Admiral Dundas to express the pleasure which Mr. Delaine reported to Mr. Layard, and which Mr. Layard foolishly stigmatised as cowardice, in the letter which the *Times* published, and for which Mr. Layard has apologised. But the result of the attack on the harbour on the 17th of October, still farther proved the absurdity of the taunt. On that occasion the "Agamemnon," bearing the flag of Sir Edmund Lyons, was indeed placed in advance of the rest of the fleet ; but by Admiral Dundas's orders, and with a chivalrous feeling of regard for his second in command, the place assigned to the "Agamemnon" was, in fact, the safest amongst the advanced ships : the "Arethusa" and the "Albion" were the two ships which in reality bore the brunt of the batteries. The "Agamemnon" came out comparatively unhurt, while the "Arethusa" was only saved from sinking by the energy of her gallant Commander, Captain Symonds, and his crew, and, like the "Albion," has been brought home fit for nothing but to be broken up. But the result of all these gallant efforts was to shew only that the ships could not approach near enough to damage the batteries,

and that if the whole of the fleet had been able to go in, the result might have been fatal to the expedition. So far, therefore, Mr. Layard's first escapade was most justly censurable, and ought to have taught him greater caution in dealing with individuals. But now it appears that in blaming Captain Christie, both he and the *Times* newspaper had got hold of the wrong man. It was the same at the Liverpool Dinner - the attack on Lord Hardinge was rash and unjustifiable. There may have been, and no doubt there has been, favouritism in the promotions in the Army ; but again, he had got hold of the wrong man, [58] and was blaming the promotion of two officers, who had earned their advancement by personal bravery and exposure to danger, as great as ever purchased gilded spurs for knights in the olden time.

But, whilst we do not screen Mr. Layard, - whilst we neither sympathise with his attacks on Lord Raglan, Admiral Dundas, or Captain Christie, - whilst we more than doubt his recommendation of the gallant and *debonaire* Sir Colin Campbell as a successor to the equally gallant, but more sedate, Lord Raglan, - whilst we incline to think that even his Lordship's personal staff are more reliable than Sir Colin Campbell's, - yet, we also regret the want of dignity with which the House of Commons has assailed Mr. Layard.

The country feels that there has been gross mismanagement in some quarters, and is irritated because it cannot find out who is to blame. The House of Commons, instead of calmly shewing how much is to be attributed to a forty years' peace, to false economy, and to defective experience, has tied to victimise Mr. Layard, and turn him out as a wild beast to be hunted down and worried. This is most unwise ; it is irritating the people, and, in reality, shielding Mr. Layard.

Sir James Graham's attack on him, in the matter of Captain Christie, would almost be ludicrous, were not the occasion so melancholy. One word from Sir James Graham in the House of Commons three months ago might have healed the wounded spirit of the gallant man, and saved him from a premature death. He could have told Mr. Layard that Captain Christie's age was registered in the books of the Admiralty - that he was fifty-seven and not seventy years of age. He could have said that Captain Christie was not responsible for the confusion at Balaklava harbour, and that his duties [59] were confined to the superintendence of the transports which were outside ; he could have said a few kind words as to his past services and high recommendations, even while promising strict enquiry as to his recent conduct. But not one word of kindness or of justice escapes until the hand of death has made either praise or censure immaterial. On the contrary, he was dismissed by Sir James Graham, stopped on his way home, and ordered to take his trial for mismanagement. Nay, Mr. Gladstone, in his defence of his late

colleagues, took credit for the energy of Sir James Graham's proceedings against Captain Christie, and declared in distinct terms, that in the charge of mismanagement against that unfortunate officer, Mr. Layard only "agreed with the presumptions of his Right Honourable Friend." Now, indeed, with an assurance amounting almost to effrontery, Sir James Graham steps forward and takes advantage of that feeling which always accompanies death, he tells us that he looked Mr. Layard "steadily in the face" as he announced that Captain Christie had died a broken-hearted man. But who does not feel that it was not so much Mr. Layard as Sir James Graham who occasioned the catastrophe ? Captain Christie could well have sustained the taunts of Mr. Layard, - these taunts did not break the heart of Admiral Dundas, because nobody believed them. But had Admiral Dundas been undefended in Parliament, had he been ordered to haul down his flag, like Sir Charles Napier, or to be tried by a Court Martial, who will say what might have been the effect on the gallant veteran ? It was Sir James Graham's leaving Captain Christie as a victim undefended in Parliament, superseding him in office, and directing him to be tried by court Martial, that forged the iron that entered into his soul. **[60]** We do not acquit Mr. Layard, but we still more condemn Sir James Graham ; and we are not at all disposed to allow the wily Baronet so adroitly to turn away the censure which he has himself incurred.

Since the above was in type, a letter from Mr. Layard has appeared in this morning's *Times*, which places the conduct of Sir James Graham in a very unpleasant light.

Mr. Layard states that his first attack on Captain Christie was made on the 19th of February, and that on the 23rd of the same month, before the Sebastopol Committee had been appointed, Mr. Gladstone took credit to Sir James Graham for having been *beforehand* with Mr. Layard, and having already superseded Captain Christie, and ordered him to be tried for mismanagement, of which Mr. Gladstone alleged that there was strong presumptive evidence. It turns out that these presumptions were *false*, and that the act of Sir James Graham was harsh and unjust. It is obvious that Captain Christie was then laid hold of as a victim, and that now Sir James Graham desires to cover his own harshness by an attack on Mr. Layard.

Mr. Layard quotes the statement made by Sir James Graham last Friday, and contrasts it with Mr. Gladstone's speech on the 23rd of February, and thus sums up his case : -

"A comparison of the two speeches above quoted, and of dates, will thus prove beyond question, - 1, That, so far from 'the first question of Captain Christie's fitness' having been raised by me, he had been dismissed by Sir James Graham before I had

spoken of Captain Christie ; 2, that instead of 'having instituted an enquiry into Captain Christie's conduct *after* the debate' alluded to, he had done so before ; 3, That [61] instead of Captain Christie having been dismissed partly in consequence of anything I had stated, the Government, of which Sir James Graham was a member, claimed credit to themselves for having done so *before* I had drawn their attention to Captain Christie ; and, 4, That whereas Sir James Graham states he ordered Captain Christie to be tried by a Court Martial in the Crimea, to save him from the ordeal of passing through my hands in the Sebastopol committee, that Committee was not in existence, nor did the Right Honourable Gentleman ever expect that it would be, at the time when he directed Captain Christie to be dismissed, and his conduct to be investigated."

Mr. Layard cannot exonerate himself from the charge of rashness, and from a want of feeling regard for his neighbour's reputation ; but we think he has placed Sir James Graham in a predicament from which the wily statesman may find it difficult to extricate himself with honour.

An extract from one of Captain Christie's own letters to a relation at home, will prove that in this instance Mr. Layard has stated *truth* against Sir James Graham.

E X T R A C T

BALAKLAVA, February 23rd, 1855

. . . . I am ordered home, and I hope to see you next month.

Whether I am wanted to give evidence at the inquiry that is about to be made, or what, I don't know yet - but I have just received a letter telling me that there is an officer coming to relieve me, and I shall be very glad to get rid of this most [62] disagreeable service. . . . I will write and tell you my proceedings as I advance, so you had better not send any more letters here. . . .

(Signed) P. CHRISTIE

The letter which Captain Christie alludes to, was *received* by him *at Balaklava* on *the day* Mr. Gladstone made his speech in the House of Commons (23rd February).

It has been stated in various newspapers, that Captain Christie's illness was brought on by "worry and anxiety" about the anticipated Court Martial. Captain Christie's relations and friends were well aware that this could not be the case, as they knew that conscious rectitude was one of the ruling features in his character, and that his actions would always bear the strictest public scrutiny. However, it is satisfactory to be able to give the authority of Captain (now Sir William) Mackenzie, who took Captain Christie in

his transport, the "Manila," to Constantinople and back to Kamiesch, that he was in excellent health and spirits, feeling perfectly confident of the great triumph awaiting him in his acquittal ; and the following letters *written by* Captain Christie, shew his *desire* to have his conduct enquired into, either by court Martial or by the Parliamentary Committee. He died of Crimean fever.

Extracts of Letters from Captain Christie

"ORIENT," BALAKLAVA, 9th March, 1855

. . . . You will no doubt have seen what false, vile, [63] abominable attacks have been made upon many officers out here, and how falsely that Mr. Layard states in the House, that it was through me that all the disorder in Balaklava existed. I had nothing at all to do with it. There was a Senior Naval Officer and a Harbour Master for the express purpose, and no one else was *allowed* to interfere in placing the ships or anything else in the harbour, by order of the Commander-in-Chief.

I wish I knew some Member in the House to put this blackguard down. No officer's character is safe now, and they are going the right way to work to damp all the zeal in the service. I have written to the Admiralty, telling them that I shall rejoice if they will try me by Court Martial, as it will give me an opportunity of proving to them and to the public the rectitude of all my proceedings. Very likely before long the papers will be as much in my favour, but in the mean time it is a very great bore. You must excuse a short letter, as there are several steamers reported in sight with troops, and I must go and see about them.

I am, &c., &c.,

(Signed)

P. CHRISTIE

"ORIENT," BALAKLAVA, 16th March, 1855

Here I am still. Captain Heath got a fortnight's leave of absence to go to Malta, and they wont let me start till he returns here. However I expect him in two or three days, and shall start forthwith. You would read the abominably false statements that Mr. Layard made about me in the House of Commons. I have written to Sir James Graham, through Captain Milne, requesting him to contradict the statements, as they are all utterly false. [64] I had no more to do with the regulations of Balaklava harbour than you had. There were two officers appointed for the express purpose of placing the ships, and keeping it in order, and it is rather too bad that I should be blamed for their neglect.

I never enjoyed better health in my life than I have out here. There are a great many jealous snakes in the grass in this world,

and it gives one some trouble to find them out and crush them. I will write and tell you where to direct, as I fix my route.

Yours, &c., &c.,
(Signed) P. CHRISTIE

BALAKLAVA, 28th March, 1855

Here I am still, although most anxious to get away to Old England to protect myself against those low, vile, false attacks which have been made by some wretches, and the erroneous impressions which may be made in consequence. I can refute every statement that has been made, and if I do not arrive in England before the Parliamentary Committee is closed, I will request the Admiralty to grant me a Court Martial, in order to clear every thing up. Captain [Heath, who is appointed to succeed me here, I expect to-morrow, and I will start homewards as soon as possible. Digby Marsh will accompany me, as well as my Secretary, Mr. Pritchard ; and I shall endeavour to get myself righted directly I get to London. I have written to Mr. Layard and requested him to answer me to No. 6, New Inn, Strand. . . . There is a good deal of vexatious* work before me, so all I can say is, God's will be done. I shall defend myself as best I can, trusting in his support.

(Signed) P. CHRISTIE

*This refers to implicating Superior Officers.

[65]

CONSTANTINOPLE, 9th April, 1855

. . . . I had fairly started for England ; but when I arrived here, I found orders from the Admiralty for me to return, as in justice to me they think it right, I should have an opportunity of refuting and contradicting all *that* has been so unjustly said about proceedings out here. They have ordered a Court Martial to be held, and I hope to come off with *flying colours*.

You will probably have seen all about the Addresses, &c., that have been presented to me. This is all very flattering, but the impression made on the minds of the people in England, by the false statements which have been made, will take some time and trouble to rub out : the people out here are outrageous about it.

We are such a distance off, that all who have been attacked must just grin and bear it for a time. Directly the trial is over, I shall start homewards. Digby Marsh is still with me ; I have also got my Secretary, whom I mean, if possible, to take to England with me.

No man is safe now in serving his country : the *Times* fairly rules the nation. Very soon they wont have an officer worth having to serve. Even if I am offered a good appointment now I wont accept, I am *so disgusted*.

I am, &c., &c.,

(Signed)

P. CHRISTIE

Extract from "Blackwood's Magazine" of May 1856

. . . . Of Sir James Graham, the war tells us only that he twice sent away a fleet to the Baltic with inadequate appliances for its formidable work : and, from repeated instances, it has become painfully apparent that the reputation **[66]** of no servant of the British Crown is safe in his hands. Who has forgotten the Court Martial he ordered to try the unfortunate Captain Christie ? or the shameless course by which Sir James, when brought to task, sought to throw the blame of his conduct on another, by declaring that he had ordered the court Martial in consequence of a misstatement of Mr. Layard's, although it was subsequently established that the trial had been ordered before Mr. Layard had ever opened his lips on the subject !

Captain Christie was attended by his earliest friend and shipmate, Captain Marsh, and his Secretary, during his illness, which at first they hoped was not to be fatal ; but, after rallying so far as to give hopes of his being able to go home, he suddenly relapsed, and on the 1st of May, at 5 p.m., he breathed his last on board the "Gertrude" transport, in Kazatch Bay. His faithful and kind friend, Captain Marsh paid the last sad duty on earth to his much injured friend ; and, as chief mourner, attended to the grave his mortal remains, on Thursday, 3rd May.

Captain Marsh ordered an oak cross* to be put up to mark the spot, with these words : -

TO THE MEMORY OF
CAPTAIN PETER CHRISTIE, R.N.
Who Departed this Life, May 1st, 1855
Universally Regretted,
AGED 58.

* Now replaced by a Marble Tablet.

[67] Mr. Pritchard, who was Secretary to Captain Christie, returned to England the beginning of June, with Captain Marsh, R.N. He had all the letters and documents relative to the Transport Service which had belonged to Captain Christie ; he, of course, knew all the particulars connected with Captain Christie's most onerous duties, and he expressed himself as being highly indignant

at the gross injustice which Captain Christie had met with, and said, that he was most anxious to "vindicate the memory of his beloved and much injured chief;" he said that if Captain Christie had been spared to stand the Court Martial, nothing could have been more triumphant than it would have been, as there was not one single witness against him ; and had the court Martial taken place, under such circumstances, Captain Christie would have had it in his power to have appealed to his country for redress against those who unjustly tried to defame his character. Many of the papers and documents above alluded to are now published in Mr. Wood's book, "The Past Campaign ;" but no one knew so many particulars as Mr. Pritchard did, and had he been examined in evidence, he could have stated all the truth *publicly*. He was, at Captain Christie's request, accompanying him to England for that purpose, and had reached Constantinople with him, when the Admiralty order met Captain Christie to return to Kamiesch, where again Mr. Pritchard accompanied him. But [68] his immediate appointment (upon his returning to England) as Secretary to Admiral Freemantle, sent him out of the country before there was any opportunity of bringing forward his evidence. Mr. Pritchard spoke of the extreme delicacy Captain Christie felt in implicating the conduct of his superior officers, which in preparing his defence he was obliged to do, as in order to prove himself blameless, he had to shew that he acted under orders which it was imperative on him to obey. Admiral Lyons was aware *before* Captain Christie left Balaklava, that the Admiralty order would meet him at Constantinople, for he himself had received a letter to that effect, by which means he could have stopped the useless voyage to Constantinople, as the order was sent there merely *in case* Captain Christie should have left Balaklava before Admiral Lyons received his letter from the Admiralty.

The Lords of the Admiralty must have been aware of Captain Christie's innocence of the charges brought against him, else they would not have placed his name at the head of the list of those who, had they lived, would have been made C.B.; and the reason they did not publicly in the House of Commons vindicate his memory is very obvious - they could not do so without censuring the conduct of others whom they wished to shield.

Mr. Pritchard said, that no one who had not witnessed the arduous and laborious duties with which [69] Captain Christie had to contend, could form the least idea of them ; that he had more to do than almost ever fell to the lot of Civil, Military, or Naval man before ; and that Captain Christie, upon all and every occasion, fulfilled his onerous duties with the greatest zeal for the good of the service. When he went to Balaklava, there were neither Guard Boats, Police, nor Signals, - all these were organised by this meritorious officer. There are many who can testify to the *truth* of

the above statements, as extracts from the following letters will show :-

E X T R A C T S

No. 1.

"A good number of our R.N. friends have read 'Woods' Book' with the deepest interest. I saw at Portsmouth, who told me many things of your dear lamented brother, whose unwearied activity *he* had constant opportunities of observing, at the *very time* Layard was traducing his character.

No. 2.

"As I knew that it was doubted at the Admiralty whether proper signals had been established for transports entering Balaklava harbour, I sent a private note to Captain Milne, with my own Signal Book, established and arranged by your brother even previous to the gale o November, 1854, and this was entirely arranged by Captain Christie, not only for transports, but for ships of war.

[70]

No. 3

*Written from on board a steamer going from Alexandria to
Balaklava*

"I was greatly distressed to hear from the Captain of the steamer, that our friend Captain Christie had not been expected to live when he left Balaklava. He (Captain Millar) had been in the Transport Service during the whole winter ; and he said he could express his own, as well as the opinion of nearly every other Ship Captain in the service, that never were charges more unjust and unwarranted than those against Captain Christie, and that a trial would have been a triumph."

No. 4

"I have seen the work you spoke of : all the statements respecting your brother are strikingly correct, and most fully exonerate him from the slightest blame. So unmistakeable is the whole matter, that the Admiralty ought publicly in Parliament to exonerate the lamented Captain Christie. There is a fact omitted by Mr. Woods, viz., - Captain Christie, in his anxious foresight for

the shipping, previous to any ship having parted, or struck, made the signal to cut away masts."

THE EXAMINATION OF CAPTAIN DACRES BY MR. DRUMMOND,
M.P.,
BEFORE THE SEBASTOPOL COMMITTEE

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS : -

Ques. You are asked concerning Captain Christie. Do you know him ? [71]

Ans. Yes, quite well.

Ques. It has been stated that he is an old gentleman upwards of seventy ?

Ans. That is not true, he may be fifty-five or fifty-six.

Ques. Do you know where he was on the 14th of November at the time of the storm ?

Ans. Yes, he was outside in the "Melbourne."

Ques. Did he send to you for leave to let the "Prince" go into harbour ?

Ans. He spoke to me himself : he said "we want to get the 'Prince' in." I said, will you get her in to-night ? and he said "certainly not, blowing as it is," and he turned to the Captain of the "Prince," who confirmed the same thing.

Ques. If blame has been imputed to him because the "Prince" did not go in, that is not deserved ?

Ans. No.

Captain Dacres is truthful in saying that Captain Christie "spoke to him," but *why* evade the question, "did Captain Christie send to you for leave ? " Captain Christie went himself, and failing in obtaining leave for the "Prince" to enter the harbour, *sent* Lieutenant Hutchinson *three* times with a most earnest request.

The following account, written in Captain Christie's *private* Memorandum Book, (sent home after his death) states all the particulars of the case.

Memorandum, 1854.

The cause of the magazine ship "Resolute" being ordered out of the harbour of Balaklava on or about the 26th of [72] October, was the uncertainty of our being able to retain possession of the place, and to insure the Army being supplied with ammunition in the event of our losing it. The "Medora," another magazine ship, was also kept out for this purpose - these two outside, the "Star of the South" and the "Earl of Shaftesbury" inside, the harbour. This was approved of by the Commander-in-Chief, as my letter from the

Quartermaster-General states, and the Senior Naval Officer at the time approved, and ordered the vessels to be towed out of the harbour. These ships were all intended by me to go into harbour again, directly Balaklava was found to be secure. Shortly before the storm of the 14th November, I told the Masters of the "Resolute" and "Rip Van Winkle" (another vessel outside), that it was my intention to get them in as soon as possible. The Senior Naval Officer in the port had the *tugs under his command*, consequently, it *depended* upon *him* whether the vessels were towed in or out of harbour. It was necessary to keep the "Resolute" at anchor, in order to get supplies from her, and I considered it very unsafe for any merchant sailing vessel to stand off and on for any length of time off Balaklava, the currents are so uncertain and run so strong. The "Pride of the Ocean" was nearly on shore in consequence of having to stand off and on for some time, waiting for a tug. The "Prince" arrived off Balaklava on the 8th November, on a beautiful day, and lost two anchors trying to bring up ; she stood out, and ultimately hung on by a hawser to the "Jason," till the 46th Regiment was disembarked by small steamers. In the afternoon I told Commander Baynton, the Agent on board of her, to hold her in readiness to get into harbour : she got another anchor ready in the course of the night, and anchored again on the 9th.

[73] Between the 8th and 14th I sent Lieutenant Hutchinson three or four times to Captain Dacres, the Senior Naval Officer in the port, requesting him to allow the "Prince" to get into harbour ; and I allowed her to remain near, as I did not suppose it possible that a valuable ship like her would be allowed to remain out with one anchor, when there were two guts at hand, besides all the assistance that two line-of-battle ships ("Agamemnon" and "Sanspareil"), and several other men-of-war, could have rendered if necessary ; besides, I considered it of the greatest consequence to the Army that she should land the warm clothing for the troops, and the rest of her valuable cargo, as soon as possible. I only wanted a tug and leave for her to go in, when she would have been placed in safety. I think I should have acted wrong had I ordered her to the offing, when I expected leave for her to go into port every hour. When the tremendous storm of the 14th November commenced, the "Prince" drifted foul of "Lady Valiant," striking her heavily. She steamed close by her, but shortly after began to drag her anchor. She cut away her mizen-mast, which I believe fouled her screw. She was driven on shore in a thick heavy squall, a few minutes after : when it cleared a little, there was not a vestige of her to be seen. The "Prince" was lost entirely through Captain Dacres not allowing her to go into Balaklava harbour : there was plenty of room, tugs at command, and fine weather. Had he given me the use of the tugs, I should also have saved the

“Resolute” and “Rip Van Winkle.” The latter vessel had been damaged by one of the frigates, and was to have gone to refit. The “Kenilworth” was under orders to sail for Eupatoria, and I found fault with the master for not getting under weigh only a day or two before the storm.

[74] CAPTAIN BAYNTON, R.N., TO CAPTAIN CHRISTIE
H.M.S. “MEDWAY,” BALAKLAVA, 15th March, 1855

MY DEAR CAPTAIN CHRISTIE, - I have, as you may imagine, a very vivid recollection of all the circumstances connected with my poor father’s loss ; and, in reply to your question as to my knowledge of the cause of the steamer “Prince” not being brought into harbour on her arrival off this port, I distinctly remember my father to have told me, that on reporting his arrival to Captain Dacres, and requesting his instructions, he was informed by that officer that there was no room in Balaklava harbour for her reception, but when convenient, an officer would be sent out to assist her in.

I am, my dear Captain Christie,
Very truly yours,
(Signed) ED. BAYNTON

To Captain CHRISTIE, R.N.

CAPTAIN BAYNTON, R.N., TO CAPTAIN CHRISTIE
H.M.S. “MEDWAY,” BALAKLAVA, 17th March, 1855

MY DEAR SIR, - I have no hesitation in saying, that there was plenty of room in this harbour for the “Prince” on her arrival on the 8th November last, and I feel confident, that there are at present at least doubt the number of ships now lying here, which, in my opinion, renders the fact indisputable.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) ED. BAYNTON

To Captain CHRISTIE, R.N.

CAPTAIN CHAMPION TO CAPTAIN CHRISTIE
Steam Transport “MELBOURNE”, BALAKLAVA, 16th March, 1855

SIR, - In reply to your request, I beg to state that, to the best of my remembrance, there were not more than thirty-five

to forty vessels in Balaklava harbour on or before the 14th November, and that there was abundance of room for the steamship "Prince" in the harbour.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed) W. CHAMPION,
Master, S. S.

"Melbourne"
Captain CHRISTIE

CAPTAIN LANE TO CAPTAIN CHRISTIE

BALAKLAVA, March 19th, 1855

MY DEAR SIR, - Understanding that you are desirous for me to furnish you with all the information I possess relative to the circumstances attending the unfortunate ship "Prince," on her arrival off this port in November last, - I can only state, that it fell to my lot to introduce the late Captain Goodall of the "Prince" to you on the Ordnance Wharf in this port, the day after his arrival, at which time he requested that his vessel might be brought into the harbour. Your answer to him was, - "I am here for the purpose of getting your ship into port and to have room made for her," and I may observe you appeared very anxious on this matter. The fact of there being room is, I think, sufficiently proved by there being at this moment more than double the number of large vessels in this harbour than there were then.

I have heard with much regret that you are to be superseded from your present office ; and as you will probably have left before my return to Balaklava, permit me to take my farewell of you now, and to thank you for the consideration, kindness, and attention I have experienced since I have been under your orders ; and I feel assured, that in parting with the [76] Commanders who have had the honour of serving under you, you carry with you their united best wishes, as you do those of

Yours most truly,
F. H. LANE,
Commander, Steam Transport "Jason."
To Captain CHRISTIE, R.N.

CAPTAIN PONSONBY TO CAPTAIN CHRISTIE

"TRENT," at BALAKLAVA, March 25th, 1855

DEAR SIR, - Having been an intimate friend of the late Captain Lewis of the unfortunate ship "Resolute," I, perhaps, know as much, or more, of his solicitude for his ship as any in the service, and of his strenuous endeavours to get his ship into a place of safety, as he, being an old shipmate, generally consulted me on matters of importance. I recollect, on the 12th November, Captain Lewis, coming on board the "Trent," and requesting me to go with

him on board H.M. ship "Sanspareil," as he wished to place the position of the "Resolute" before the Senior Naval Officer of the port of Balaklava. I went with him, and we saw Captain Dacres. Captain Lewis represented to him the unsafe position of the "Resolute," and requested him, as Senior Naval Officer, to allow him to come into the harbour. Captain Dacres replied, "I have nothing to do with it ; but why do you not go to sea ? " Captain Lewis replied, "I have the working stock of powder on board, and consequently cannot go. What would be said if powder was required, and I was not at hand ? Why, the whole siege would be stopped, and the responsibility I would incur is more than my position is worth." Captain Lewis then said, "There is an excellent berth where I lay before, and my old moorings are still there ; let me come in at once, as I cannot answer for the consequences of another night like [77] the last." I then volunteered to go outside with the "Trent," and tow the "Resolute" in. But Captain Dacres said, "I have no authority to allow the powder ships to come in ; but I certainly think she ought to be inside as soon as possible." After this interview we went on shore. Admiral Lyons happened to be on the beach. Captain Lewis immediately went to him, and requested him to allow him (Captain Lewis) to bring his vessel into the harbour. What answer Admiral Lyons made, I cannot say ; but, however, it was very unsatisfactory to Captain Lewis, who came to me, and said, "It is a hard case that I am compelled to lay outside, and lots of room in here, with my ship deep with the very sinews of the war." And he added, "Captain Christie would, I think, let me come in, were he not overruled by a higher authority." I, at this remark, related to Lewis the circumstance of the "Trent" having got inside. I arrived off Balaklava, on the 10th November, at 5 P.M., and proceeded at once for orders to the "Melbourne," that being for the time your flag-ship. Mr. Pritchard, your Secretary, told me to go inside at *once*, if I could go inside ; and added, "If you go to the Senior Naval Officer, you will have to anchor outside, and land the horses in a small steamer, - that is the way things are done now." I immediately took the ship into the inner harbour, and received, along with the Captain of the "Bride," a reprimand for having done so. (The "Bride" was ordered out, but did not go.) This was the last time I saw Captain Lewis. He proceeded at once to his ship, with the remark, "I will see you to-morrow, as Captain Christie has promised me to let the ship come inside, if he possibly can ; so do not send for your things."

I am much grieved to think that any erroneous statements [78] should have been made connected with you, as I, along with all the other Captains of my acquaintance in the Transport Service, have always had the greatest confidence in you as our head, and from you we have on all occasions received the greatest assistance ; and if we, as a body, have shown a degree of zeal for

the service on which we re employed, it has been fostered by our great respect and esteem for our Principal Agent, and it is with great regret we hear that you are to be taken from amongst us.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours truly,

(Signed) GORDON PONSONBY

Captain CHRISTIE, Principal Agent of Transports, "Orient"

CAPTAIN PONSONBY TO CAPTAIN CHRISTIE

"TRENT," April 5th, 1855

DEAR SIR, - I never heard Captain Lewis represent to you the safety of unsafety of his ship, but he told me that he had represented to you that the "Resolute" was in an unsafe position, and that you had told him that his ship should be taken inside as soon as you possibly could get her in, and Captain Lewis added - "I think there is some contra order from a higher authority, which Captain Christie cannot get over. I wonder if Lord Raglan has anything to do with it ?" I never heard a harsh word pass between you and Captain Lewis, but quite the contrary was the feeling - at least, on his part, and I ever heard him speak of you in the highest terms of respect and confidence ; and in a letter I once wrote to Captain Lewis, asking his advice, he wrote back to me the following words - "This is my opinion, but Captain Christie is always ready to give us his advice and assistance, and by [79] all manner of means apply to him, and you will be all right." The last time I saw Captain Lewis he said to me energetically - "I wish Captain Christie had had his own way, and then I would have been snug inside."

I further state, that I am ready to make affidavit to this, as well as to a former letter I have written to you.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) GORDON PONSONBY

Commander, "Trent."

Captain CHRISTIE, R.N.

COPY OF TWO LETTERS FROM CAPTAIN CHRISTIE

TO CAPTAIN MILNE,

FOUND IN HIS (CAPTAIN C.'S) DESK.

"ORIENT," BALAKLAVA, January 17th, 1855

MY DEAR MILNE, - I have just seen an article in the *Times* from the third mate of the "Resolute" against me, which I enclose : it is quite contrary to the truth, because I met the Master of the "Resolute" at all times in the kindest manner, as I always found him a most attentive good man. He did express to me his dislike to the outside anchorage, and I told him how anxious I was not only to get him into harbour, but all the others, and that it was my intention to get them all in as soon as circumstances would admit of it. It is very annoying, when one is working his heart out for the Army and his country, that the editor of a paper should suffer such an article to be inserted, without ascertaining whether it is right or wrong.

The vessels were anchored outside the harbour, it being absolutely necessary for the safety of the Army, and sanctioned by the Commander-in-Chief, as at that time it was by no means certain that we should be able to hold Balaklava ; and I divided the magazine ships two outside and two in, and went out myself in the "Melbourne," and anchored amongst them. I have no time to battle with newspapers, but I do hope the Admiralty will not suffer the article to pass unnoticed, and if you will be kind enough to assist me, I shall be exceedingly obliged. The Army is suffering fearfully from sickness, and the Hospitals in the Bosphorus are so crowded, that they are obliged to remain on board the steamers : this impedes our progress in embarking the Turkish Troops from Varna very much, as those vessels had orders to coal at Constantinople and proceed on that service with all dispatch.

That paper would also lead the public to suppose that I had something to do with every confusion that takes place in the harbour, whereas I have nothing to do with the placing of the ships in Balaklava - that is left entirely to the Harbour Master. I assist him as much as I can, and have erected a flag-staff for the purpose of keeping the transports out by signal till he is ready for them.

I am, yours, &c., &c.,

(Signed) P. CHRISTIE

Captain MILNE, R.N., Admiralty.

This touching appeal from an absent brother officer was paid no heed to, and the article alluded to never was contradicted.

"ORIENT," BALAKLAVA, March 5th, 1855

MY DEAR MILNE, - Many thanks for your kind note of the 16th. Although a Court Martial is at all times a formidable thing, still, on this occasion, I feel such perfect confidence of [81] success, that I rather rejoice at it. I will, I am in hopes, prove to the Admiralty and the public the rectitude of all my proceedings.

I was as innocent of the loss of those two ships, "Prince" and "Resolute" as a babe in a cradle. No officer could do more than I

did in my endeavour to place them in safety. I only wanted a tug and leave to enter the harbour to accomplish this.

After the "Prince" arrived on the 8th November, there were four days before the gale on the 14th on which she might have gone in. There was nothing of greater importance, in my opinion, going on at the time ; there was plenty of room in the harbour ; two tugs, two line of battle ships, and several other men-of-war present, - *yet*, with all this force at command, my earnest request was not attended to ; and this ship with her one anchor and valuable cargo, was allowed to remain outside. I, of course, did not order her to sea with one anchor, as I expected her to be taken in every hour ; and I knew that it was of great consequence to the Army that the warm clothing should be landed as soon as possible. I don't think poor Dacres will ever forgive himself for this.

The Transport Captains and Agents are all outrageous at my being superseded; and I trust the Lords of the Admiralty will soon be convinced how little I have merited such treatment. The weather has been fine for some days, which has dried up the country and roads famously. The railway is getting on rapidly, and is now conveying goods about two miles out towards the camp. The number of sick is diminishing as the season advances, and everything improving, but I cannot see any likelihood of Sebastopol falling yet. Our transports have landed about 38,000 Turks at Eupatoria, with [82] plenty of provisions ; and, I am happy to say, upwards of 2000 cavalry.

I am, yours, &c., &c.,

(Signed)

P. CHRISTIE

Captain MILNE, R.N., Admiralty

From the "United Service Gazette."

A Good Service Pension of £150 a-year, the Companionship of the Bath, and two excellent appointments in succession, have been conferred upon Captain Sidney Colpoys Dacres. Captain Dacres was in command of the "Sanspareil," in Balaklava harbour, and acted as Captain of the Port during the fearful hurricane of November, 1854, in which the "Prince," "Resolute," and "Rip Van Winkle" were lost. We ask what part of the fearful calamities of that disastrous gale was attributable to the orders of Captain Sidney Colpoys Dacres, C.B. ? Did he not, in defiance of the remonstrances and earnest entreaties of poor Captain Christie (upon whose shoulders the blame at one time rested), and of the Captain of the ship, order the "Resolute" out of Balaklava harbour needlessly, and knowing, as any seaman would have known, that a

ship so deeply laden was not safe in Balaklava Bay, even in ordinary weather ? Did not the gallant officer, upon the plea of bad health, beat a hasty retreat from a scene of havoc and confusion, much of which was due to his own mismanagement ? and did not the "invalid officer," immediately on his return, obtain a lucrative place, as Superintendent of Packets at Southampton, which he only relinquished for a still more agreeable retreat at Haslar Hospital ? For which of all his splendid achievements did Captain Dacres acquire a pension for "good and meritorious services" ?

[83] FROM THE HON. COLONEL GORDON TO CAPTAIN CHRISTIE

Before SEBASTOPOL, March 21, 1855

DEAR CAPTAIN CHRISTIE, - I was sorry to hear to-day, from Captain Hamilton of the "Diamond," that you were expecting to be relieved immediately, and going to leave us. For having had all the hard work through the winter, and having got the Transport Service into something like order, it is a pity you should go away just as the duty is becoming lighter, and when it is a question of re-embarking, I am sure I shall miss you. If I can be of any use to you hereafter, in pointing out the difficulties you have had to encounter, and the way in which they have been overcome, I shall be most happy to do so.

Believe me, yours very truly,
(Signed) ALEX. GORDON

FROM GENERAL AIREY TO CAPTAIN CHRISTIE

MY DEAR CAPTAIN CHRISTIE, - I will be prepared to attend, whenever you want me, at the Court. With regard to the magazine ship "Resolute," you ought to summon Colonel Adye Royal Artillery, who is charged with every thing connected with ammunition, and who will be ready to vouch for the absolute necessity of keeping the "Resolute" close at hand, as she was filled with ammunition for the infantry and field artillery.

Believe me,
Yours very faithfully,
(Signed) RICHARD AIREY

HEAD QUARTERS, April 20, 1855.

[84] TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MORNING HERALD" FROM MR. SNEE

SIR, - I think it but justice to the memory of Captain Christie, as well as to the Masters of the Transports, late under his orders,

to state, that I was directed by Captain Lawrence of the ship "Orient," in behalf of himself and eighty Masters of steam and sailing Transports, to select an elegant silver salver as a testimonial of their esteem, to be presented to him in the most delicate manner ; and in the event of his death (as he was then taken ill), the testimonial was to be handed to his family. I may add, that the inscription, by rather a singular coincidence, is dated the 1st of May – the day of his death.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

(Signed) J. A. SNEE

6 NEW INN, STRAND, May 23, 1855.

This piece of plate is now in the possession of his sister, Miss Christie. Such a Testimonial is very precious to his surviving relatives, as a proof of the high esteem in which he was held by those who had the best opportunities of knowing and judging of his conduct in the Transport Service ; and it was the remark of an Admiral who was at Balaklava about that time, that he never knew any Testimonial more spontaneous, or more heart-felt than that of the Captains of Transports to Captain Christie. To all and each of these eighty Captains the family of the late Captain Christie would [85] wish to offer their thanks, - not so much for the costly plate, as for the manly firmness that made them step forward (when the press in England was running him down, and the Admiralty left him undefended) to express their conviction of the zeal and ability with which he had discharged his duties.

The following article appeared at the time so many slanderous reports were circulated against Captain Christie : -

From the "Fifeshire Advertiser"

"Captain Christie, who was to have been tried by Court Martial, is dangerously ill." Such is the last announcement from the Crimea ; and, if true, it is not to be wondered at, for no man has been more unfairly and cruelly treated : as a distance of three thousand miles from home, and without the opportunity of answering for himself, he has been condemned unheard, and dismissed untried ; while the public press has wrathfully circulated every accusation against him, without waiting for proof or explanation.

Thus harshly and *unjustly* used, it cannot be matter of surprise if a gallant spirit has deeply felt this unprecedented treatment, and even succumbed beneath it. It would, however, be matter of blame in us – for we should be wanting in justice and common humanity, knowing Captain Christie as we do from his long residence in this neighbourhood, of which he is a native, being the son of one of our largest proprietors – if we did not publicly lift

up our “voice” and declare to all who know him not, that in many and important particulars he has been grossly maligned.

[86] We are not in a position, any more than others, to decide upon the alleged professional shortcomings of Captain Christie ; but we are in a position to assert, that many of the charges brought against him are *notoriously untrue*. It is not the case, as has been affirmed, that he is unfitted for active duty by reason of his years ; on the contrary, he is little past the prime of life, and strong and active in his frame. There are few men, however young, who can outwork him on the mountain or the moor. Neither is it true, as has also been said, that he is coarse and profane in his language – on the contrary, he is mild and refined in his manners ; is known and beloved by all for his urbanity and benevolence ; and truly a Christian in his conduct. His absence is much lamented by his clergyman, as an exemplary member of his flock, who had a strict regard for all the ordinances of religion, and a hand “open as day to melting charity.” In proof of the manner in which he discharged his duties as a gentleman and an officer, the handsome testimony borne to Captain Christie by the Masters of the Transports, and recorded in the columns of the *Times*, and the evidence of an Honourable Scotch Member, Mr. Dundas, who, in the House of commons, spoke loudly from observation of the extraordinary exertions of Captain Christie at Balaklava, are surely worthy of as much credit with the public as that of witnesses against him, who are less numerous – in some cases less trustworthy – and certainly not more competent to decide.

Whether Captain Christie, or any man, could have done all that was expected of him at Balaklava, is very problematical, considering the novelty and difficulties of his position ; and if he has not accomplished all that was required, the blame, most likely, lies with his employers, whose incredible ignorance and **[87]** imbecility in devising and providing for the conduct of this war, have been as costly to the reputation of their best officers, in all services, as to the lives of their best soldiers. If, therefore, Captain Christie falls, he falls in good company ; but, sure we are, that the gallant men who compose a Court Martial will never countenance this unmanly attempt to sacrifice a brave and experienced officer, who has “done the State some service,” in order to atone to public indignation for the gross incompetency of others.

It is not our intention, in this statement, to pass any eulogium on the private character of Captain Christie, but merely to shew that many of the allegations brought against him personally, are utterly untrue ; and, therefore, to suggest that other charges against his professional conduct may be equally unfounded. At all events they have yet to be proved ; and until they are, let us suspend our judgment ; and, in fairness to a British officer, to whom reputation is dearer than life itself, express a hope, that

those papers which have copied the charges against him, which we have shewn to be false, will give this refutation as wide a circulation as the slanders.

The following articles appeared in different newspapers, &c., after the publication of Mr. Woods' book, "The Past Campaign" : -

From the "Edinburgh Courant," January 8th, 1856

Some of our readers may recollect, that among the minor circumstances which marked the closing sittings of Mr. Roebuck's Committee, last spring, was a remarkable observation which fell from Sir James Graham in respect to Captain Christie : - "For these mistakes," said Sir James, referring to the occurrences during the terrible gale of the 14th November, [88] "the Admiralty has ordered him to be tried by a Court Martial, and I believe he is now a broken-hearted man, and not likely to live to meet that Court." In our comments at the time, we had to remark that this prediction was already fulfilled, the gallant Captain having breathed his last on the 1st of May - a fortnight before the words were uttered. He was thus deprived of the opportunity of clearing himself, in the authoritative manner which he ardently desired, of the charges which had been made against him in different quarters, even since the fatal storm. We need not here refer to Captain Christie's accusers, who, it may be hoped, spoke in good faith, though with that wanton carelessness about facts which has been displayed too often during the progress of the war. We believe that a very brief time sufficed completely to acquit the late Superintendent, in the opinion of all who took the trouble to acquaint themselves with the real state of the case. Upon the spot, among the Captains of Transports, there never was any other feeling than that of indignation at the charges against him. And, if any one still lingers in the notion that these had even the slightest foundation, the impression will assuredly be removed by the full and circumstantial account given by Mr. Woods, the late Correspondent of the *Morning Herald*, in his recently published History of the Campaign. It will there be seen established, on documentary and other evidence, that at the time of the storm Captain Christie's authority was superseded by a superior officer ; that he used all his influence, and made every exertion to obtain the necessary sanction for bringing the "Resolute" and "Prince" into the harbour ; and that his want of success was owing to difficulties over which he had no control. No one was willing to incur responsibilities except the Captain, and when his authority [89] ceased, no orders could be obtained. Although we have nothing to revoke or correct in our own judgment of the events in question, but many, on the contrary, claim always to have taken the side of justice, we are still happy to

direct our readers to testimony so conclusive as that to be found in Mr. Woods, and only regret that this statement is too long for transfer in our columns.

From the "Fife Herald"

Among other features, which give a permanent value to Mr. Woods' narrative, is the fact of his having had access to the private and official correspondence of the late Captain Christie, whose lamented death last spring led to a good deal of angry recrimination regarding Crimean management. A detail of the circumstances connected with the fearful gale of November '54, when the ill-fated "Prince," and a large number of smaller transports, were wrecked, goes to exculpate that gallant officer from the charges then brought against him - charges, however, which were laid hold of by Sir James Graham (and not by Mr. Layard), with the view of making Captain Christie the scape-goat of Admiralty blunders at home. The "great heart of the world" is ultimately just, and now the fair fame of a brave man is about to be vindicated from unjust aspersion and unmerited obloquy. Captain Christie's death was very affecting, but, vain regrets over, duty unfulfilled did not embitter his last days.

From the "Witness"
THE LATE CAPTAIN CHRISTIE

The London Correspondent of the "Liverpool Albion," referring to Mr Woods' new work, just published, "The [90] Campaign in the Crimea," says : - Few blunders excited more painful derision than that concerning poor Captain Christie's despatch of a steamer from Balaklava to Constantinople for boots, at the very time she was laden with those articles. Yet what are the facts of the case ? Why, that Captain Christie had nothing whatever to do with it. Mr. Woods quotes a letter from Sir E. Lyons, dated on board the "Agamemnon," on the 18th September, directing that the "Sea Nymph" proceed "instantly to catch the French mail leaving the Bosphorus on the 20th. True, she had on board the very commodity they wanted, but there was no time to unload, and only barely time to fulfil the Admiral's order."

The case of the "Himalaya" and charcoal created, if possible, still more "derision" than even the "Sea Nymph" with her cargo. The following extracts from a letter will show the *facts* of the case :

-

Extract from a Letter giving the account of the "Himalaya," and charcoal

"It is difficult, in the small lines of a letter, to tell you of those various matters in which the conduct of my truly noble-minded friend has been so shamefully attacked. I will, however, mention one - the case of the 'Himalaya,' and Captain Christie's refusal to land her charcoal. This proved the subject of a most virulent attack in the *Times*, being the editorial comment on the evidence of Captain Kellick of the 'Himalaya'. Captain Kellick behaved, in my opinion, very badly ; for he kept back all that portion of truth which would have more than justified Captain Christie. The evidence given by Captain Kellick is this : - *Question asked* - 'Did [91] you not take charcoal down to Balaklava ? *Answer* - 'Yes.' *Question* - 'Why was it not landed ?' *Answer* - 'I offered to land it in my own boats, but Captain Christie refused to receive it, and I therefore took it back to Constantinople.' Upon this, the *Times* writes a most savage article, which your brother felt far more deeply than he ought to have done ; but Captain Christie was a man of the nicest sense of honour, and perhaps too susceptible feeling. Now, what were the real facts ? The 'Himalaya' arrived here in October, with troops, and about 20 tons of charcoal, which it is very true that Captain Kellick volunteered to land in his own boats, simply thereby doing his duty. But, at this very time, an order came from Lord Raglan, requesting Captain Christie to send 'Himalaya' immediately to Varna for horses. This admitted of no delay. Not only so, but Captain Christie knew that on the return of the 'Himalaya,' these few tons of charcoal could at once be landed ; and that, *in the meantime*, a steam-ship, the 'Sea Nymph,' was at that very time discharging a cargo of charcoal in the harbour. Captain Kellick went to Varna, got foul of a ship called the 'Courier,' damaged his screw, and, instead of bringing back horses, was compelled to go to Constantinople for repairs. All this, which was very discreditable to the 'Himalaya,' never appeared before the Sebastopol Committee. But I do say, that it was a disgrace to Captain Kellick thus to keep back all the most important portion of the truth, which would of course have thrown a new and different light on the whole matter. These are simple facts - there are written documents to prove them - they admit of no gainsaying."

[92] CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN GENL. ----- AND -----

Letter from Genl. ----- to -----

-----, April, 22nd, 1855

Your letter I duly received this morning, and with it the *Morning Herald* of the 19th, containing the Testimonial to Peter from the Masters of Transports at Balaklava, - a more decided expression of opinion than which cannot be. I have read it with infinite pleasure as a high token of their love and respect for Peter, their late commanding officer, in perilous and difficult times ; and with scarcely less pleasure to find as English gentlemen, they can fully appreciate and boldly express their opinion of approbation for officers who have done their duty. Be assured I will give it every publicity in my power, and call attention to it, one of the Committee. I will write also to a far more important man, Mr. a leading man in the shipping interest, in whose province Peter's cause especially lies. This friend of mine has at present four or five ships employed in the Transport Service in the Black Sea. The more you can give publicity to Peter's case the better. Sir James Graham will give him no help - he never does. I will also write to Anthony Maitland, and others.

Yours, &c. &c

From Genl. ----- to -----

28th April

I enclose you a note I have had from my friend

Yours, &c. &c.

Note from Friend to Genl. -----

April 25th

. . . . I have your note of the 22nd ; what you say quite agrees with all I can learn of Captain Christie. . . . has written to me various letters about Captain Christie, in the hope that I may use any little influence in my power to vindicate his character from the reproaches cast upon it. I have therefore considered it my duty to make enquiries, and from all I can learn he seems to be one of those which our Government - our imbecile Government - appear determined to sacrifice on the altar of their own incapacity and jobbery. I must further say for Captain Christie, that from all my ships not one word of complaint have I ever heard against him : I see three of my commanders have signed the Testimonial to which

you refer. I will embrace the first opportunity of doing justice to him in the House.

Yours, &c. &c.

From Genl. ----- to -----

May 16th, 1855

. . . . Bad news, alas ! flies fast. Drummond called here an hour ago, and brought the sad tale of poor Peter's death. . . . A nobler spirit was seldom to be found, or one more thoroughly esteemed and loved by those who knew him. . . .

Yours, &c., &c.,

-----.

Letter to ----- from one who had taken a part in a Public Meeting before the truth of Captain Christie's proceedings had come to light

. . . . "It is unhappily impossible to remark upon [94] great public calamities without ruin to individuals, and this was unfortunately my position, when called upon to move the resolution you refer to. Permit me, however, to say, that in the remarks I felt it needful to make, I repeatedly reminded my audience, that the case against Captain Christie was *ex-parte* only, and that no conclusion could be arrived at until captain Christie had been heard ; and, further, that many circumstances seemed to me to favour the supposition, that not Captain Christie, but others, his superiors, were primarily the authors of the calamities, which had so much moved our feelings, and excited our indignation. Subsequent events did more than verify these suppositions, and though we have still to mourn over those grievous errors, we know to whose vacillations and shortcomings they were due ; and Captain Christie is known to have been the victim, and not their author.

"I sincerely sympathise with you in your desire to free the memory of a dear relation, and brave gentleman, from the calumnies which wee heaped upon him, and anything I can do to give publicity to the facts of the case, I shall gladly attend to.

"I am, &c., &c.,

"-----."

While those high I office were endeavouring to lead the attention of the nation away from their own faults and

shortcomings, and statements were being made to which facts and dates gave a point-blank contradiction, the shocking injustice of allowing a brave and honourable man to be condemned unheard, [95] and his reputation maligned behind his back, began to rouse the indignation of several Honourable Members of the House – to all of whom the relatives of the late Captain Christie feel deeply grateful, specially to Mr. Fergus, the M.P. for Fife (Captain Christie's native county) – a man of talent and refinement – one who was never known to speak for the sake of self-display. Strong in the consciousness of having truth and justice on his side, and with moral courage sufficient to set at nought every other consideration, Mr. Fergus stood up in his place, and electrified the House by a speech remarkable for its clear, calm, unvarnished statements. How different from the flimsy quibbles that some Members had recourse to was the weight of truth of that speech – sharper than any vituperative abuse its simple detail of facts !

We have now put together some of the particulars relative to the appointment of Captain Christie, R.N., as Principal Agent for transports in the Black Sea, and to his conduct in that most responsible and difficult post, along with a few (out of the many) letters written to him by the Captains of Transports and others, expressing their opinion of his services. This slight memorial is intended for his friends and relatives, who would like to have a statement of the circumstances in a somewhat connected form ; but it may meet the eyes of some hitherto unacquainted with the real facts of the case, or who may have hastily taken [96] up the misstatements so virulently put forth at first in the *Times* and other newspapers (supposed to be the organs of the government), that Captain Christie was the cause of the fearful loss of life and property on the fatal 14th of November, 1854, and of all the subsequent misery arising from the want of the warm clothing, &c., lost in the transports that night.

We feel assured that no one can read the evidence adduced in this little sketch, without coming to the conviction, that Captain Christie was not the man to blame ; that had his earnest and repeated requests to Captain Dacres been attended to, the "Prince" might have been safe. Why Captain Christie was selected to be the victim offered up to appease the wrath of an irritated nation, while those really guilty were screened from the just indignation with which they should have been visited, is a mystery we do not attempt to fathom. Certainly as noble and gallant an officer as ever served his country was left undefended by those who could and should have protected him. He might have overlooked the attacks of writers in newspapers, orators on platforms, or even speeches of Members in the House, had not those then at the head of the Admiralty given weight and currency to the slanders, by affixing to them, as it were, an official seal in superseding him untried, and

condemning him unheard. What wonder this preyed on the mind of one so full of honour, [97] and so sensitive to the slightest work reflecting on his reputation as an officer ? When prostrated by low fever, the thought must have added to his sufferings, that he was not to have the opportunity his trial would have afforded of vindicating his reputation to his country. There is, however, a tribunal higher than any earthly one, where no mistaken judgment can ever be pronounced, Captain Christie's maxim was "to act as if our Saviour was always at our side seeing us," and that Master whom he faithfully served will not forsake any who trust in Him : whatever sorrows or trials they may have to pass through here, He will ultimately "bring forth their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noonday."

ABERDEEN :
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